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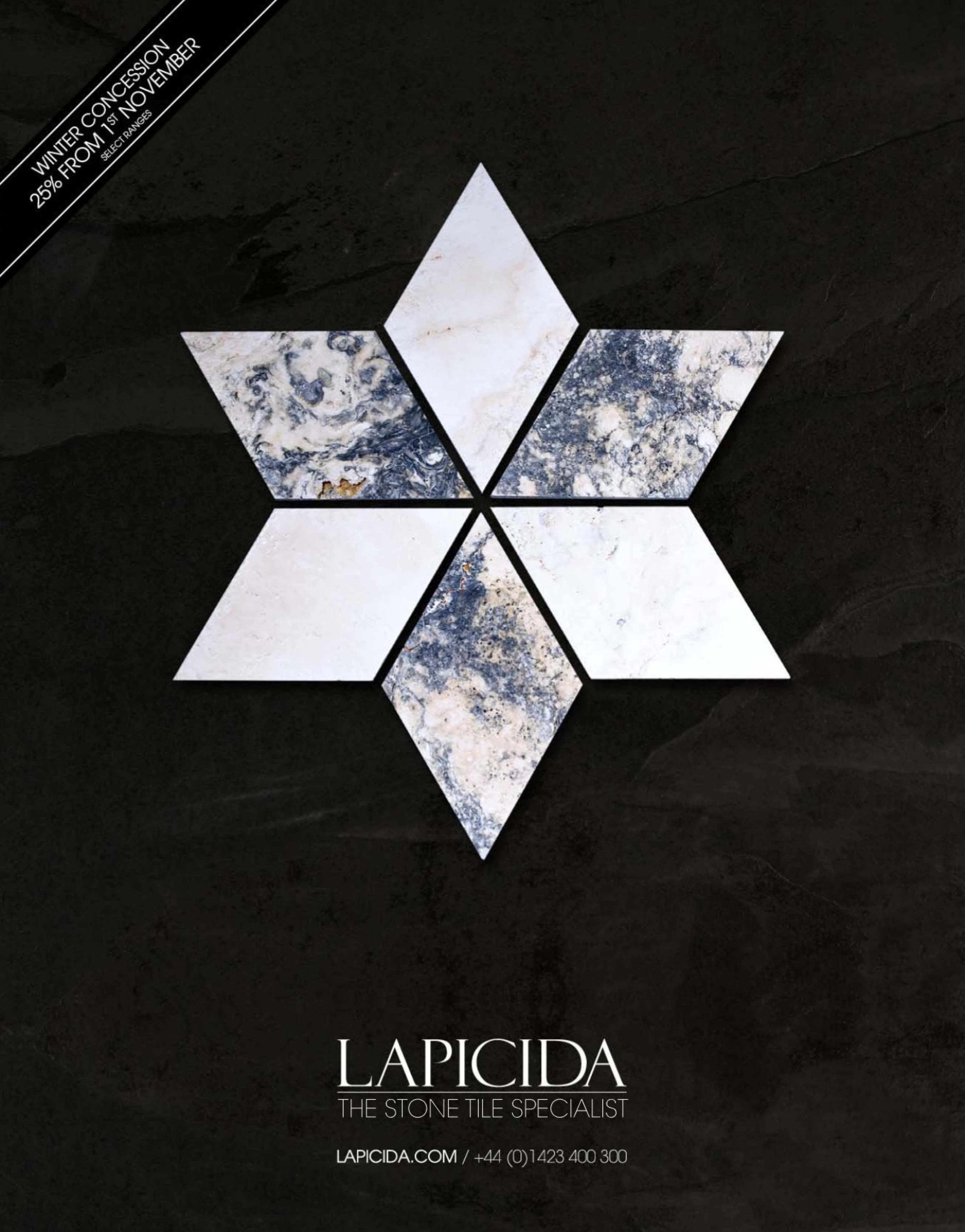


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3 REASONS
TO TAKE A TRIP TO LEEDS

Sam Aspinall, owner of gift shop Cadeaux shows us around her favourite hometown haunts.

1 VISIT The Victoria Quarter. From its elegant architecture and expansive stain glass ceilings to the fantastic array of designer brands and one-off boutiques, this really is a shopaholic's dream. And its elaborate Victorian arcades provide the perfect shopping environment and shelter from the unpredictable Yorkshire weather. Look out for Harvey Nichols, Louis Vuitton, Agent Provocateur, The White Company, Jo Malone, Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith and, of course, Cadeaux!
Visit: www.v-q.co.uk or tel. 0113 245 5333.

2 EAT at Azucar. Situated at Brewery Wharf along Leeds revitalised waterfront, this area is a real triumph and buzzes with life in the evening. The restaurant's interior is an eclectic mixture of old church benches and pews and the walls are littered with owner Howard Marks' travel memorabilia. There is a really relaxed atmosphere and the food is authentic South American tapas.
5 Brewery Place, Leeds, LS10 1NE.
Visit: www.azucarbar.co.uk or tel. 0113 243 5761.

3 DRINK at Prohibition. With an extremely sexy and sultry interior, the atmospheric lighting and leather booths give an ambience of modern day Moulin Rouge – it's definitely a place where Leodians go to let their hair down. On top of all that is a truly impressive cocktail menu and my personal favourite is the Strawberry Geeves – sweet, frothy and pink – what more could a girl ask for?
Yorkshire House, Greek Street, Leeds, LS1 5SH.
Visit: www.prohibition.uk.com or tel: 0113 224 0005.

ABOVE Cadeaux is a contemporary giftware shop located in King Edward Street, Leeds.
Visit: www.cadeaux-leeds.com or tel. 0113 234 6466.

WELCOME TO OUR DECEMBER ISSUE



Photo **Sussie Bell**

Well it's definitely Christmas here in the office, much to the delight of *CFL*'s hardworking team and in particular Magazine Designer, Carly, who just loves this time of year. And who can blame her – we've been surrounded by trees, decorations and assorted gifts for well over a month now and as of yet have not tired of that festive vibe! And if you were wondering what we do with all the lovely things that arrive on our desks, check out our seasonal style shoot (page 61) which is packed with inspirational decorating ideas for the modern home. Turn to page 74 and you will also discover our eight-page bumper gift guide. We have managed to put together over 70 great gift ideas and I promise you will be able to cross at least one or two presents off your list this year!

Christmas is, of course, a time of entertaining, be it with family or friends, and when it comes to putting on a festive display who could deny the merits of dressing the seasonal table with British design guru William Yeoward's stunning tableware. Stylist Katie went along to meet the great man (see above) and find out more about his life and work. Check out page 110 where we also take a look at his book on – yes, you guessed it – entertaining! Of course entertaining at Christmas inevitably means accommodating guests, for many of us. So why not ensure a warm welcome by updating that guest room with the latest linens (see page 84).

If all this sounds exhausting – and let's face it Christmas may be enjoyable but it can be quite stressful – why not treat yourself to a relaxing weekend break and celebrate the new year in style (page 118) – you don't have to go far as there are some great little boutique hotels to be found in and around the UK.

Finally, all the team here at *CFL* wish you a very Merry Christmas.

See you in 2010.

Paula

Paula Woods, Acting Editor

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THIS MONTH WE LOVE...



1



2



3



4

FESTIVE WREATHS

Whether hung inside or out, decorative wreaths will ensure a warm welcome this Christmas.

1 Silver sleighbell Wreath, £19.95, Dotcomgiftshop. **2** Pine cone and berry wreath, £20, John Lewis. **3** 'Fairytale' Wreath, £53, Berry Red. **4** Christmas Wreath, £22.95, Caroline Zoob. **5** Crab apple wreath, £29.99, The Contemporary Home. **6** Olive heart wreath, £12, Plumo. **7** Linea 'Renaissance' gold and copper wreath, £25, House of Fraser.

For stockist details see page 128



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6



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RETAIL THERAPY

Christmas is just around the corner so why not celebrate in style with our hand picked selection of statement pieces for your home. Guaranteed to bring a touch of designer-style to proceedings this festive season.



RIGHT
Sophie Conran's latest collection of tableware, 'White Oak' for Portmeirion comprises classic designs taken from the inspirational English countryside. Elegant and timeless the range can be used every day of the year and is perfect for Christmas entertaining. Prices start from £18 for a serving bowl. **Tel. 020 7724 5318 or visit: www.sophieconran.com**

FAR RIGHT
Rasmus is delighted to announce the addition of three new lights to the iconic collection by Danish designer, Verner Panton. As pictured, 'Fun 10DM' priced at £995 features a delicate array of pearl discs suspended from metal rings. Available in two sizes this statement light is a definite buy. **Tel. 01423 560 050 or visit: www.rasmusdesign.co.uk**

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BELOW
Perfect for small spaces, leading kitchen manufacturer Alno offers nine high gloss ranges, compromising 12 colour options. As pictured, this contemporary and timeless design in high gloss white is also available in four colours and has added features such as LED lighting. Prices start from £15,000.
Tel. 0870 0433 742 or visit: www.alno.co.uk



Upholstered in luxurious black cashmere the Sophie Loren side chair, £182, from Occa Home is the perfect way to add a touch of glamour to your bedroom. Pair with a dramatic dressing table or add as an accent for an instant update.
Tel. 0844 879 4258 or visit: www.occa-home.co.uk







Luna gold from Lapicida is made from engraved travertine with hand-applied gold leaf. Each tile is coated with three layers of lacquer in order to waterproof the tiles. The tiles are priced at £1,595 per m sq.
Tel. 01423 400 100 or visit: www.lapicida.com

ABOVE
Graham & Brown have launched their flock wallpaper collection exclusively designed by Barbara Hulanicki. Featuring 12 striking colourways across five designs, which include fashion and illustration-inspired twists alongside bold graphic prints. Colours are vibrant and available in contrasting textures. This unique range is priced at £60 per roll.
Tel. 0800 328 8452 or visit: www.grahamandbrown.com

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TOP RIGHT

The new bold 'Rays' chair from Ciacci Kreaty features legs of aluminium alloy and a shinning shell-shaped seat. It is the ideal addition when it comes to creating a stylish feel to your home. Priced at €265.

Visit: www.kreaty.com

RIGHT

ModoLuce present their bold collection of ceiling lamps with hand-finished pleated fabric shades. 'Loto' in vibrant red is designed by Bruno Menegon and Annarosa Romano and is perfect for the contemporary home. Priced at €190.

Visit: www.modoluce.com

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LEFT
The latest Vivenne Westwood wallpaper range for Cole and Son is based on signature designs from Vivenne's fashion collections. As pictured, 'Trompe L'oeil Drape' is a wide width wallpaper and is also sold as a complete panel. Priced at £188 for a 270x270 panel. **Tel. 020 8442 8844 or visit: www.cole-and-son.com**

ABOVE
Arredo presents 'Componibili'. Designed by Anna Castelli Ferrieri for Kartell this stylish storage adds a funky element to any room in the home. The units are available in a variety of sizes and come in red, white, silver and black with a matt finish. Prices start from £41. **Tel. 0845 459 2164 or visit: www.arredo.co.uk**

ABOVE
'Ocean' is the latest fabric collection from Wilman Interiors. Inspiration has been drawn from delicate coral reef patterns, flowing waves and rippling sand dunes. Choose from six organic designs. Prices start from £30 per metre. **Tel. 0845 271 7333 or visit: www.wilmaninteriors.com**

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ABOVE

Normann Copenhagen presents a series of towels designed by Anne Lehmann. Featuring a mosaic pattern, these elegant and soft 100% cotton towels are available in a range of simple colours. Prices start from £16.75 for a small towel.
Visit: www.normann-copenhagn.com

RIGHT

Exclusive to John Lewis is the new furniture collection from British designer Nick Munro. The range includes an elegantly crafted walnut living and dining range where his distinctive designs feature great attention to detail. Complementary upholstered accessories are also available. Prices for the range start from £249.
Tel. 08456 049 049 or visit: www.johnlewis.com

BELOW RIGHT

Mark Elliot is giving you the opportunity to design your own furniture – simply choose a colour, shape or pattern to create a chair or sofa that's just for you. First select a style from a beautiful range of handmade sofas (made to order in Staffordshire and Suffolk), then specify the size to suit your home, and finally browse through a vast selection of fabrics to find the perfect colour and texture.
Visit: www.markelliot.co.uk

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LEFT CENTRE
Today Interiors present 'Kariba II', a rich textured velvet that is perfect for adding a sumptuous touch to your home this winter. Available in 15 opulent colourways, prices start from £63.04 per metre. **Tel. 01476 574 401 or visit: www.todayinteriors.com**



From her latest autumn collection Nina Campbell introduces 'Sylvana' fabrics and wallpapers. This stunning romantic collection features designs like the 'Gilty' wallpaper, an all-over pattern of small-scale metallic lozenges on a variety of coloured grounds. Prices on request. **Tel. 020 7225 0644 or visit: www.ninacampbell.com**









ABOVE
Available from Four Seasons the stunning 'Bavaria & Sapporo' kitchen is available in a high gloss finish and monochrome colourway. Combining clean lines and seductive curves the kitchen makes a compelling style statement. Prices start from £2,633. **Visit: www.fourseasonskitchens.co.uk**

INSET LEFT
The Conran Shop's latest furniture collection features stunning iconic pieces perfect for making a statement in your home. As pictured the 'Mademoiselle' armchair is designed using thick, soft fabric in a striking Missoni pattern. Priced at £348. **Visit: www.conranshop.co.uk**

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DESIGN NEWS



IMPOSSIBLE TO RE-SIST

Looking for unusual presents or decorations this Christmas? Then take a trip to Northumberland where you will discover the delights of RE. Run by Simon Young and Jenny Vaughan this fascinating store sells an eclectic mix of fabulous finds for the home, along with a unique range of originals and textiles designed by RE and made locally. We can't wait to get festive with their white paper snowflakes, from £2.50 each. **You will find RE at Bishops Yard, Main Street, Corbridge. Visit: www.re-foundobjects.com or tel. 01434 634567.**



ANIMAL INSTINCTS >>>

Go wild this winter with Original Style's striking new Tileworks collection. Featuring stylishly strokable animal fur prints these large format ceramic tiles are suitable for use on walls, floors and in showers. Choose from Tiger, Friesian, Zebra and Leopard, together with co-ordinating gold, bronze, athracite and white field tiles. Original Style's Tileworks is priced at £49.95 per sqm. **Visit: www.originalstyle.com or tel. 01392 473000.**



Stone the crows!

Always fancied a sleek granite worktop? Online retailer Cargo Granite offers all of its exquisite granites at an incredible 50% discount. Our favourite is this stunning Nebulas granite – normally retailing at £945 per sqm you will pay just £472.50 per sqm! Cargo Granite offers a full supply, cut and installation service and each month selects one particular stone to be discounted at a further 20% – so keep your eyes peeled for a bargain by visiting: www.cargogranite.co.uk.

RE-INVENTING RETRO

Georgia Horton's latest collection of hand printed, silk-screen metallic wallpapers brings new subtlety and depth to an old favourite. Ideal for today's contemporary interiors, her organic approach to metallics is far removed from the brashness of the 1970s and sees designs illuminated by illustrative detail and colour. Inspired by nature, these large-scale designs include 'Mikada' which is based upon twig nests. Prices from £169 per 10m roll. **Visit: www.georgiahorton.com or tel. 01795 530755.**



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Kütchenhaus cooks up a storm Birmingham

It's an exciting time for German kitchen experts, Kütchenhaus, as not only have they opened a new superstore at the Princess Alice Retail Park, Sutton Coldfield, but they have also revealed their stunning new 2010 collection. The sixth store in Kütchenhaus' ever growing portfolio, the West Midland showroom features over 35 lifestyle room-sets showcasing the new ranges and two kitchens *CFL* predict will create quite a stir in the design stakes are 'Highlight' (shown here) and 'Feel'. **Prices start from £7,000 including appliances. Visit: www.kutchenhaus.co.uk or tel. 0121 362 7300.**



HABITAT COMES TO LIVERPOOL ONE

CFL favourite Habitat is opening its first Liverpool store just in time for Christmas. The two-storey store will feature Habitat's entire autumn/winter collection focusing on living, dining and bedroom. Check out the new Habitat store at Peter's Lane, Liverpool One. **Visit: www.habitat.co.uk or tel. 08444 991 111 for more information.**

Calling all aspiring designers – BoConcept challenges you to create your very own cup design! Simply visit the website, download a template of their popular collector's cup and submit your design. The coolest cup will be sold in stores worldwide and the winner will also receive a boconcept gift certificate. Entries must be submitted by 25 December.

Visit: www.boconcept.com.

HEAL'S CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

To celebrate their Bicentenary, upmarket retailer Heal's has launched 'Heal's Rediscovers' – a range of new furniture and accessories inspired by Heal's illustrious heritage and created by some of the best British furniture designers, including Tom Dixon, Kay + Stemmer, and Wales & Wales. A *CFL* favourite is Sarah Kay and Andrea Stemmer's wonderfully covetable curvy sofa, 'Flow', £2,495.

To find out more visit: www.heals.co.uk or tel. 08700 240 780.



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HOT ON COLOUR

Stay warm this winter with Feature Radiators' colourful range of Decotherm radiators. The versatile Decotherm, which can be hung horizontally or vertically, is available in a myriad of colours, so whether you want to be outrageously daring with vivid brights or discreetly subtle with muted tones, there is sure to be a shade to suit your needs. Also available in white and aluminium; prices start at £366 for colours. **Visit: featureradiators.com or tel. 01274 567 789.**





Backing British Design

Smallbone of Devizes, the iconic name in kitchens is launching an exciting series of collaborations with top British designers. The initiative sees British talent create a 'signature' design, which is then handpainted onto Smallbone's handmade furniture. The first of these unique commissions features the work of Nina Campbell, one of the world's most influential interior designers. Inspired by snakeskin her shimmering design changes both its perspective and colour in different lights and is perfectly suited to the architectural lines of Smallbone's furniture. **For further information tel. 0845 606 6568 or visit: www.smallbone.co.uk.**

GET ALL STEAMED UP

Fed up waiting for the kettle to boil – then why not have boiling water on tap? Today's must-have kitchen accessory for any chic contemporary kitchen, the Steaming Hot Water Tap, provides filtered boiling water instantly at the push of a lever. Clean, simple and stylish the tap, by InSinkErator, is also cost effective and water efficient as it only heats the water used, thus eliminating wastage from over filling the kettle. Prices from £469 for hot only tap, £527 for hot and cold tap. **Visit: www.insinkerator.co.uk or tel. 0800 389 3715.**





BEAU PERRY OPENS IN CHESTER

Beau Perry is the latest shop to hit the high street in Chester. Offering a range of unique gifts, furniture and home interior accessories, Beau Perry is the brainchild of Andrew Perry and Amy Stockdale and, having opened its doors in October, this enticing store is proving to be the place to visit for sought-after brands such as Jan Constantine, Anorak, Dartington Crystal, Dora Designs, Wish Originals and Portmeirion. **Check out Beau Perry at 12 Bridge Street, Chester or visit: www.beauperry.co.uk.**

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HOMES

CONCEPT FOR LIVING'S PICK OF THE BEST HOMES AND GARDENS IN THE NORTH



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Words **Jennie Musgrove** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

THE ULTIMATE BACHELOR PAD

Imagine if your job required that you live in a beautiful Victorian house filled with cutting-edge technology, from a dedicated cinema room to integrated audiovisual systems in every room...



LEFT Old meets new in this period property living room, where a traditional fireplace stands alongside a speaker concealed as artwork.

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THIS PAGE A contemporary kitchen with state-of-the-art integrated appliances ensures Simon can entertain guests in style. **TOP RIGHT** Original floor tiles and striking artwork create an entrance hall to remember! **BOTTOM RIGHT** Neutral yet warm colour schemes were employed throughout the house, creating a relaxed atmosphere.



"IF I HAVE FRIENDS ROUND THERE CAN BE PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT ROOMS WATCHING DIFFERENT THINGS. IT'S TURNED OUT EXACTLY AS WE WANTED IT TO; IT'S PERFECT"

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As one of three directors of Leeds-based audiovisual company Finite Solutions, Simon Mathieson is passionate about technology. Integrated sound systems, concealed HD televisions that are revealed at the press of a button and rooms with remote control panels instead of light switches are all part of his working life. So when the company decided to open a fully-furnished showhome, Simon jumped at the chance to live in the hi-tech house. "We were looking for a property we could refurbish and which looked grand enough to suit our company," he says. "We found this a year-and-a-half ago and myself and my partners invested in it, but for me it's a home."

The house, in Yeadon, Leeds, dates back to the 1890s and originally belonged to the owner of a local mill. When Simon and his business partners bought it, the building was structurally sound but parts of it needed restoring or replacing altogether. "All the exterior stone work was completely black because of the mills that were round here," says Simon. "As soon as we stripped it off and had the walls repointed, it was like a 'brand new' old house!" Internally, the house features original Victorian cornicing, fireplaces and encaustic tile flooring in the entrance hall. "We knew we'd bought a period house and we wanted to keep it quite ornate, as it would have been when it was originally built, but we also wanted to combine that with really modern audiovisual equipment. It was important that we had traditional-looking rooms with hidden technology," says Simon.

And when it comes to technology, the house has been kitted out from top to bottom with every gadget imaginable – including the latest HD televisions, »»»

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projectors, recessed speakers and mood lighting – as well as a few surprises. In the sophisticated living room, large speakers on either side of the TV are disguised as pieces of art, and the dining room contains a projector screen which rises up from the floor to transform the room into a boardroom. Simon's favourite part of his new home, however, is the basement cinema room. Two rows of luxurious seating face a large projector screen, and the room features a sound system to rival that of the local multiplex, with acoustic panels and an audio diffuser enhancing the cinematic experience. "The cinema was a dream come true because we've been designing rooms like that for quite a while and I've always wanted one," says Simon. "It's absolutely perfect, I probably watch about three films a week down there – it's better than going to the cinema!"

After deciding where all the hi-tech equipment would go (or rather, be hidden) in every room, Simon and his partners enlisted the help of York-based interior design consultants David Long Designs, who chose the colour schemes, floors and furniture throughout the house. The result is a glamorous combination of traditional features with a few contemporary touches. Rustic wooden floors and relaxing colour schemes in the ground-floor rooms complement the home's Victorian heritage, with the kitchen adding a modern twist. Upstairs, the cream, grey and black colour scheme continues but this time with plush cream carpets and decorative fabrics creating stylish bedrooms and further living rooms.

Ilkley-based company Verbeia created the main bathroom and master en-suite wet-room, neither of which would be out of place in a luxury boutique hotel, »»»

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"THE CINEMA WAS A DREAM COME TRUE BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN DESIGNING ROOMS LIKE THAT FOR QUITE A WHILE AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED ONE"

THIS PAGE This elegant dining room can become a board room at the flick of a switch thanks to a projector screen which rises automatically from the floor. **TOP LEFT** Restored stained-glass windows by the traditional staircase add to the property's period charm. **BOTTOM LEFT** Black slate and blue lighting create one very dramatic bathroom.

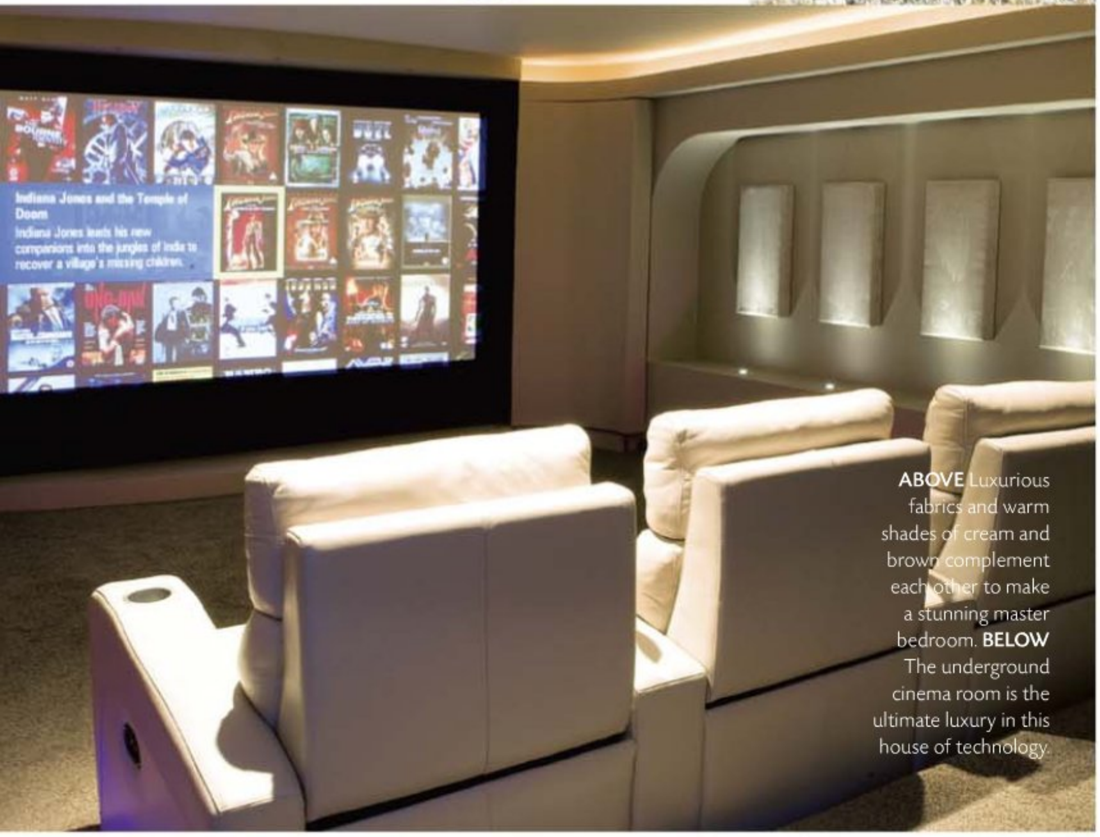


"WE KNEW WE'D BOUGHT A PERIOD HOUSE AND WE WANTED TO KEEP IT QUITE ORNATE, AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WHEN IT WAS ORIGINALLY DONE, BUT WE ALSO WANTED TO COMBINE THAT WITH REALLY MODERN TECHNOLOGY"

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> "THE CINEMA WAS A DREAM COME TRUE BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN DESIGNING ROOMS LIKE THAT FOR QUITE A WHILE AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED ONE"



ABOVE Luxurious fabrics and warm shades of cream and brown complement each other to make a stunning master bedroom. **BELOW** The underground cinema room is the ultimate luxury in this house of technology.

ADDRESS BOOK:

All the audiovisual technology and lighting throughout the home is by Finite Solutions, a market leader in the world of home entertainment systems.
www.finitesolutions.co.uk or 0113 255 4765

David Long of David Long Designs designed the interior of the house.
www.davidlongdesigns.co.uk 01904 673 710

Think Design architects designed the loft and basement conversion.
www.thinkdesignleeds.co.uk 01943 604 448

TJ Pybus carried out all the building and construction work.
www.tjpybus.co.uk or 0113 267 4222

The bathrooms and wet room are by Verbeia.
www.verbeia.co.uk or 08709 192 840

The stonework, fireplaces and kitchen worktops are by J Rotherham.
www.jrotherham.co.uk or 01430 861 047

Bernard Hobson made all the joinery work for the bathrooms.
www.bernardhobson.co.uk or 01274 596 633

The kitchen and cabinets in the hidden cinema room are from Custom Made Kitchens.
www.customkitchens.co.uk or 01405 812 625

The Antique Glass Studio restored the property's original stained-glass windows.
www.antiqueglassstudio.co.uk or 01274 683 888

The artwork throughout the home and on the speakers is by Marcus Levine.
www.levine-art.co.uk or 0113 815 5636

with their monsoon showers, subtle lighting and beautiful finishes – not to mention waterproof TVs and recessed speakers in the ceilings.

Although the house is used as an example of what Finite Solutions can do and is often visited by prospective clients, it is Simon's home and he loves living in such a future-proof property. "Irrespective of the business, I think the house is awesome," he says. "It's got everything I would want it to have and the technology makes it very entertaining. When I have friends and family round there can be people in different rooms watching different films, also there's one button to switch all the lights and technology off when you leave the home, which helps cut down on electricity bills. It's turned out exactly as we wanted it to; it's perfect." Living in a showhome isn't always easy, however, as Simon explains: "It's a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it's amazing because I love the technology and I love using it every day. The downside is that I never get any complete separation from work."

Another potential problem is keeping the home clean and tidy for when people visit; the Finite Solutions team solved this by making sure there was a room visitors would never see. "There's another basement room which we haven't renovated to the same standard as the rest of the house," explains Simon. "We've put lino on the floors and a bar down there – so if we do ever have a more raucous party, we can go there and drink and spill things without worrying!"

So the pros far outweigh the cons, and Simon lives in a house worthy of a James Bond film, with a super-stylish interior and state-of-the-art gadgets adorning every room. His verdict? "I'm single and in my 20s so I'm very happy here!"

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««« LIVING ROOM

Treat yourself to a statement chair. This classic 'Versailles Mummy' piece from The French Bedroom Company, £295, is a great catch so splash out and get yours today.

BATHROOM »»»

For hi-tech bathing check out this waterproof television complete with remote control. Available from Aqua Vision prices start from £999.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Simon Mathieson's trendy pad includes some of the latest stylish accessories and furniture pieces around. For a look that's timeless simply introduce our best buys into your home. **For stockist details see page 128**







KITCHEN »»»

Add a sleek contemporary radiator such as the 'Stradivari', from £6,334, Aestus. It's the perfect heating option with the added bonus of taking up minimal space – perfect in a kitchen leaving plenty of room for cooking.



««« DINING ROOM

Simple accessories can change a room in an instant and Simon has used clear vases with bold flowers throughout his home to great effect – create the look with our pick of vases from LSA International, starting from £25.

LIVING ROOM

Create an instant wow factor with the 'Mia' coffee table, £375 from John Lewis. This multi-functional design suits both contemporary and traditional home alike.



LIVING ROOM »»»

Simon's house is all about style so get the look with this feature floor lamp. The 'Now & Then' lamp, £199.99, from Amode is ideal for adding a touch of glamour.

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Form, space and light were the three key pillars behind the Davis' design ethos.

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UNITED COLOURS

A modernist conversion in Wilmslow has a white and red palette and features functional design and clean lines to create a fantastic flowing living space.

Words **Caroline Jones and Katie Cotgrave** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

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It's hard to believe, looking around the strikingly modern property but Peter and Natalie Davis' home in Wilmslow, Cheshire, was originally built in the mid-70s by Peter's parents. After more than three years of planning Peter and Natalie finally converted the original bungalow with the help of architect James Wareham last year. The end result is a stunning light and spacious two-storey family home. "The skeleton of the original home is still at the heart of the new house – and that's important," says Peter. "We embarked on this project to evolve, update and modernise the house for a new generation – us."

Peter and Natalie moved into the original bungalow four years ago and lived in it as it was with their two young daughters while they put their conversion plans to paper. The radical changes to the property were prompted, not by a desire for more space, but to make the home feel like their own. "It was quite a spacious building, but it felt like we were still living in Peter's parents' home," explains Natalie. "We wanted to put our own stamp on it."

"The opportunity of a great plot and to make a house to your own specification is very rare," says Peter. "So we decided to grab the chance. And the urban design officer at our local planning office was extremely enthusiastic about our design." The Davis' knew they wanted to convert the bungalow into a two-storey property, but also that they wanted a very modern building design with long, clean lines. This was not to be at the expense of it feeling and being a family home however. "When we designed the house, we had three key elements in mind," says Peter. "They were the principles of Modernism, functionality and family unity."

The Davis' chose a striking Bauhaus-inspired colour scheme of red and white and made the principles at the heart of »»»

"THESE DAYS YOU DON'T NEED A FORMAL DINING SPACE – IT ALL HAPPENS IN THE KITCHEN, BE IT A QUICK BREAKFAST OR A LINGERING DINNER PARTY"

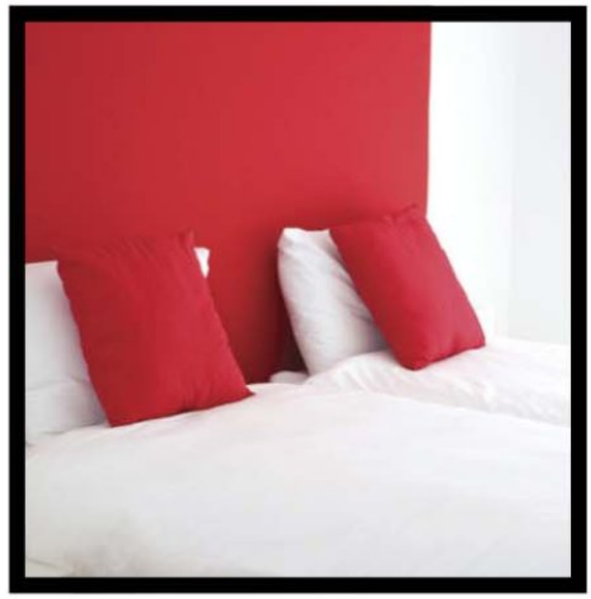




OPPOSITE PAGE Architechturally iconic buildings such as Villa Savoye's letterbox windows inspired Peter and Natalie's vision. **THIS PAGE LEFT** A neutral palette is uplifted with striking pops of red. **ABOVE** Accessories like a Union Jack cushion bring personality to the home.

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THIS PAGE LEFT An informal kitchen and dining space looks inviting yet sleek. **ABOVE** A feeling of uniformity runs through the home thanks to its Bauhaus-inspired red and white colour palette. **OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** A luxe open-plan Modo Cucine kitchen takes centre stage. **BOTTOM** By choosing not to have skirting boards the Davises achieved a chic and modern 'art gallery' look.

"WE'RE VERY LUCKY THAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO KEEP THE HOME IN THE FAMILY AND EVOLVE AND MODERNISE IT AS THE NEXT GENERATION"

Modernism: form, space and light, key factors in their design and décor. "Mies Van Der Rohe and Le Corbusier were key inspirations," says Peter. "We love buildings like Le Corbusier's house in France, Villa Savoye, with its long linear windows." The couple even chose not to have any skirting boards, so as to help create the clean, free-flowing feel of an art gallery.

The concept of flowing living spaces emanates throughout the home, particularly in the placement of the kitchen at the centre of the house – literally and metaphorically. The Davis' worked closely with prestigious kitchen and bathroom specialists Modo Cucine to design the exact cook area they wanted: from the free-standing central island, to the long clean lines of the work surfaces. "The kitchen was a huge jigsaw piece in the design of the house and we worked hard to get it right," says Peter. "We chose a Miele kitchen and Modo Cucine worked brilliantly with us to create just what we wanted – even down to incorporating the longest length of unsupported Corian that DuPont had ever done in a domestic house." The long, flowing kitchen and dining area is refreshing in its informality, a deliberate design choice. "These days I don't think you need a formal dining space – it all happens in the kitchen, be it a quick breakfast or a lingering dinner party," says Peter.

Functionality drove the Davis' project. They were able to take Peter's parents original home and adapt it in a bespoke manner, tailor-making the space to their lives, their way of living. "We're very lucky that we've been able to keep the home in the family and evolve and modernise it for the next generation," says Peter.

Along with functionality, family was another key element during the build. Peter, who painted the huge two metre square family portrait in the hallway, is a creative director for a marketing »»»

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agency and also a conceptual artist. He paints lifeline portraits to commission, an idea which encapsulates the importance of family to the Davises. "By bringing individual lifelines together I like to experiment with them as symbolic representations of a family's bond," says Peter.

A family bond is most definitely at the heart of this home – passed from one Davis generation to the next. And when asked what she likes most about the property, Natalie says, "I love the fact that it's a useful space – it's actually our home, we live in it. It hasn't just been done because of a look, it suits our family. It's our dream – our idea, we've built everything how we want it. So it's actually incredibly personal to us." That is not to say that this ambitious project was not at times stressful, "I think anyone who's done a major build or improvement project would be lying if they said it hadn't been stressful and that it all went smoothly," smiles Natalie. "But when this is the end result, it's definitely worth it."

ADDRESS BOOK:

The Davis' cool, contemporary kitchen was fitted by Modo Cucine. Visit: **www.modocucine.co.uk** or tel. **0161 439 5508** for more information.

Some of the conceptual art pieces around the home are by Peter Davis. Visit: **www.lifelineportraits.com** or tel. **07753 805 636** for further details.

John Eckersley designed the garden. Tel. **07932 890 317** for more information.

The architect for the conversion was James Wareham. Tel. **01625 537 144**.

Some of the furniture in the house was upholstered by modern upholstery specialists Lewis Evans. Visit: **www.lewisevansupholstery.co.uk** or tel. **01260 253 432** for more information.

The solid oak flooring in the home is from Scandafloor. Visit: **www.scandafloor.co.uk** or tel. **01253 714 907** for further details.

All glass work in the property is from Cheadle Glass. **Visit: www.cheadleglass.com or tel. 0161 480 6644**

"MIES VAN DER ROHE AND LE CORBUSIER WERE KEY INSPIRATIONS – WE LOVE BUILDINGS LIKE VILLA SAVOYE WITH ITS LONG LINEAR WINDOWS"





A change in colour palette makes the master bedroom and bathroom feel like a soothing oasis of calm. The modern minimalist look is fulfilled by clever storage to maximise space, reduce bedroom and bathroom clutter and retain the home's clean lines. Peter and Natalie thought a lot about functionality and making the home livable as well as desirable.

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LIVING ROOM »»»
For a feature staircase why not add the 'Hartley' from £20,000 by Bisca. This bespoke structure can be built to suit your particular requirements and is a flawless addition worth investing in.

LIVING ROOM
Curvaceous and timeless this clear glass console table from Dwell, £179, has no limits. Also available as a coffee or side table their lightweight presence oozes effortless style.

LIVING ROOM
Snuggle up with an England cushion from Rume, priced at £150 these cute cushions will instantly brighten up a neutral colour scheme. Buy yours today.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Natalie and Peter Davis' minimalist family home features striking clean lines and iconic furniture pieces. Take a look at our fabulous finds to help you create a home that's just as impressive. **For stockist details see page 128**









STUDY »»»
It's all about simple storage with this clean white bookcase from Amode, £575. Place in any room to help curb the clutter without compromising on style.

BATHROOM
Look yourself up and down in a Louis Kartell red ghost mirror, £192 from Heal's. Don't waste any time, get yours today!

STUDY »»»
In keeping with their red and white theme, Natalie and Peter Davis have used 'New York' chairs, £298 per pair, from Furniture Village in their study to add both comfort and maximum impact.

LIVING ROOM »»»
Bring the outdoors in by placing an oversized plant pot into your living room. We've found a set of two red planters from Ingarden. Available in a variety of sizes and colours, prices start from £99.

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a lakeside transformation

Celebrated for its rugged coastline and scenic views, the island of Anglesey now has a welcome addition in the shape of a modern lakeside home. Words **Jennie Musgrove** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

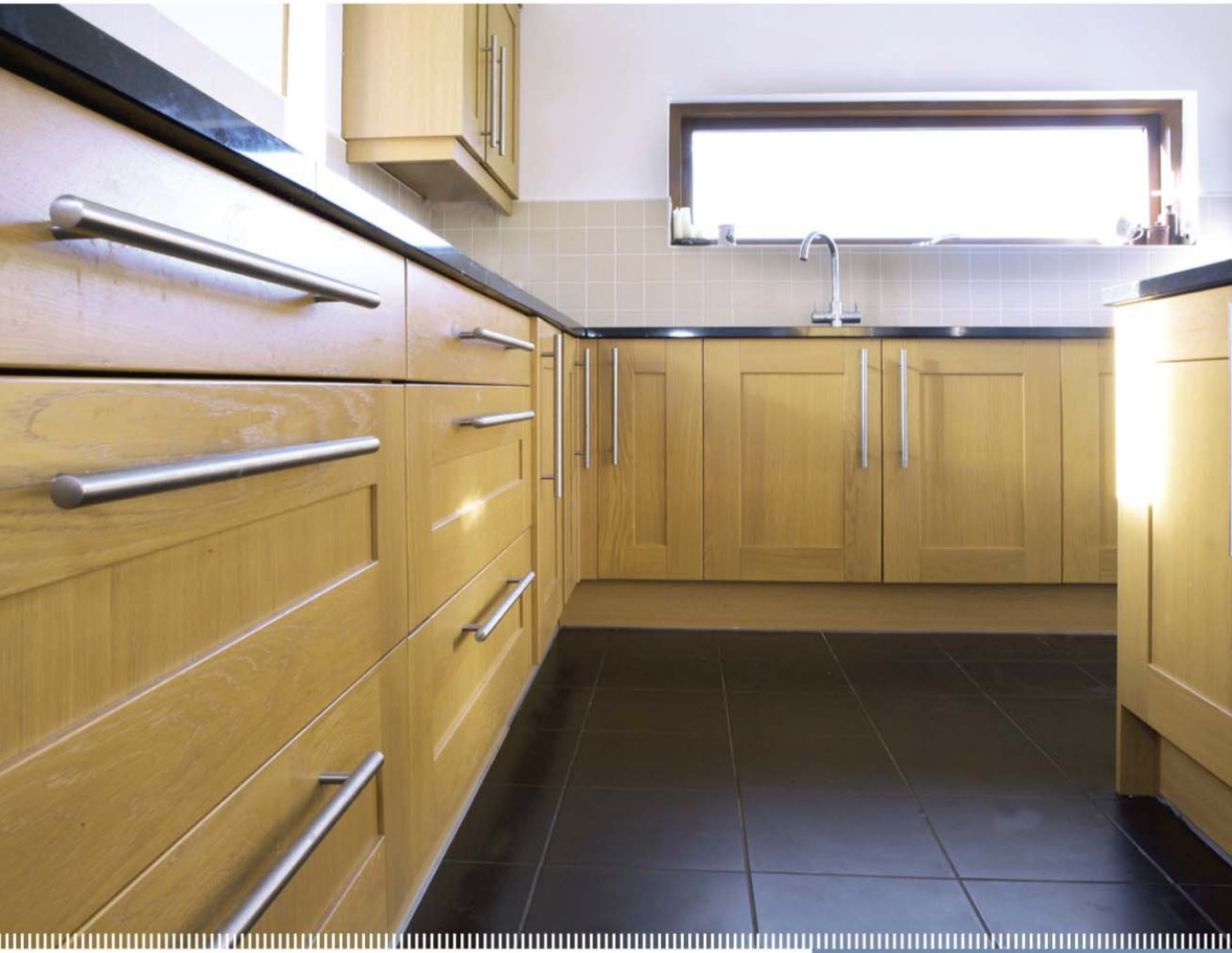
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THIS PAGE Externally, the home is now a picture of traditional style combined with contemporary architecture.

"It's a dream come true for me because I've been thinking about it for nearly 20 years. I do realise how lucky I am to live in such a lovely house"

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"I always used to walk past and think how much I loved the house. It was incredible how the renovation came about"

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT Anna's modern kitchen is an elegant blend of style and practicality. A bookshelf on the first floor landing is home to an eclectic collection of old and new volumes. A painted French display cabinet and wooden chair in the hallway create a 'rustic chic' look.

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Beside a small lake on the beautiful island of Anglesey stands Caer Llyn, an old farmhouse which was recently transformed from a dilapidated ruin into a light-filled contemporary cottage. The house had stood derelict since the early 1980s when a fire destroyed its roof, but in 2005 plans began to give it a new lease of life, and today it is a superb example of a renovation combined with forward-thinking architecture. The home's owner, Anna Philips, used to live next-door-but-one and had long admired the building's picturesque shape and elevated position by the water's edge. "I always used to walk past and think how much I loved it," she says.

After eventually buying the property, it took almost 20 years before Anna had a chance meeting with Andy Foster Architects and decided to let them oversee the renovation. "Every time I started trying to do something with it I'd hit a problem and would just give up," says Anna. "It was incredible how the renovation came about; a friend of my son's had been doing work for some houses in a local village, and he kept telling me how wonderful these houses were. In the end I invited the builder to come and see Caer Llyn, and he was interested in quoting but said I ought to talk to his architect, Andy Foster."

The Chester-based architectural practice came up with a new design for the property which would transform it into a home fit for 21st century living. Anna knew immediately that she had found the right people for the job. "The architects were genuinely fantastic," she says. "They just took over and sorted out all the problems. They carried the project forward and built this lovely house for me. In fact it was a very enjoyable experience building it, because the contracted builders were excellent and worked so well with the architects. They both kept me informed and guided during the whole process." »»»

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The new design for the property retained much of the original layout of the existing farmhouse, but with a few changes. The entrance hall was converted into a ground-floor bedroom with en-suite, and the two upstairs bedrooms were also allocated en-suite bathrooms. The modestly sized living room still features the low ceiling it would have had originally, with a glazed door at one end letting natural light in and offering beautiful views across the lake, Llyn Maelog.

The most striking aspect of the new design, however, is a modern extension which was set at an angle to the original building to make the most of the views. It houses a spacious open-plan kitchen and living room with floor-to-ceiling glazed doors making up two of room's the walls. A simple modern kitchen stands at one end and a dining table and small alcove study at the other, making the room perfectly suited to Anna's needs. "The extension was the architects' idea, and it's what makes the home lovely," she says. "As you can imagine, I live in this room most of the time."

The extension's glass doors concertina back so that during Anglesey's summer months, Anna can open up the room and let the outside in.

Externally, the home's roof and the walls of the extension were clad in dark purple Penrhyn slate, while the outside walls of the rest of the farmhouse were rendered in red and white, giving the old building a very contemporary aesthetic. Another modernising feature of the property is its ground source heat pump, which provides all the hot water necessary for heating the home and means that Anna's electricity bill is incredibly low.

The whole project took one year to complete, which is no mean »»»

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"The architects were genuinely fantastic. They just took over and sorted out all the problems. They carried the project forward and built this lovely house for me"

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT A black roof and white-rendered exterior walls create a striking house. Simple wooden furniture in the bedrooms is complemented by the plain white walls. The open-plan dining room is filled with natural light thanks to the glazed windows which make up two of the walls.

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"The extension was the architects' idea, and it's what makes the home lovely. As you can imagine, I live in this room most of the time"





ADDRESS BOOK:

Chester-based Andy Foster Architects designed the home's extension and oversaw the entire renovation project. **Email: mail@andyfosterarchitects.com, visit: www.andyfosterarchitects.com or tel. 01244 343 772**

JCM Construction carried out all the building work. **Email: peter@jcmconstruction.co.uk or tel. 01824 790 690 or 01407 729 846**

Pump Well Solutions drilled the bore holes for the ground source heat pump. **Email: pumpwell@googlemail.com or tel. 01248 440 665 or 07846 278 444**

Bluestone Renewables maintain the ground source heat pump. **Tel. 07778 500 114**

The kitchen is from DR Plumbing Kitchen & Bathroom Studio. **Tel. 01248 422 378**

feat considering the scale of the renovation and extension. This time efficiency, according to Andy Foster of Andy Foster Architects, is down to the excellent team work from everyone involved. "Helping to re-invent Caer Llyn as a modern house has been a pleasure for us," he says. "The project benefited from great team work with the client and the building contractor, and everyone involved has been pleasantly surprised by the degree of local interest and the compliments we've received from people who have known the house for many years."

For Anna, the transformation of the old ruin she used to walk past into a stunning home with all the requirements for contemporary living is a dream come true. "I never thought I would actually do it," she says. "So it's a dream come true for me because I've been thinking about it for nearly 20 years. I do realise how lucky I am to live in such a lovely house."

LEFT The modern inset fire in Anna's living room echoes the home's black and white exterior. **RIGHT** The extension was built at an angle to the original building to make the most of the view across the lake.

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LIVING ROOM »»»

Keep your fireplace tidy with the indoor log basket, £34.99 from The Contemporary Home. Easy for storing logs this cute accessory adds character in an instant.

««« BEDROOM

Add some character with an antique chest of drawers, check out this great vintage piece from The Old Cinema, priced £595, and start making your statement.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Mixing old and new is what Anna Philips house is about. Full of character and family pictures she has created a home that's timeless and you can do the same with our selection of stylish key pieces. **For stockist details see page 128**



MAIN BEDROOM »»»

The perfect storage solution – these white leather baskets from Store will keep your home clutter-free. Just £19 per pair.





LIVING ROOM

Add the 'Normandie' chair, £386, from John Lewis to your home an instantly inject warmth, texture and individuality.

Brighten up an old piece of furniture or simply introduce welcoming neutral tones to your home with milk white paint from Pots of Paint. Priced at £29.50 for 2.5lts.



MAIN BEDROOM »»» »»»

We cannot guarantee it is made from Welsh sheep's wool, but this pure wool duvet, £59.99 from Green Stamp will definitely keep you warm this winter. Ideal for owners of rural properties as nights do tend to be colder.

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An English Country Garden

A two-acre garden near Leeds features a traditional layout of connecting areas separated by yew hedges. *CFL* visited to find out how such a well-established English garden was created in just over a decade.





ABOVE Herbaceous borders and yew hedges surround a neatly trimmed lawn in front of Preston's home.
OPPOSITE Tall artichokes add structure to the garden, while wooden archways lead into different sections.

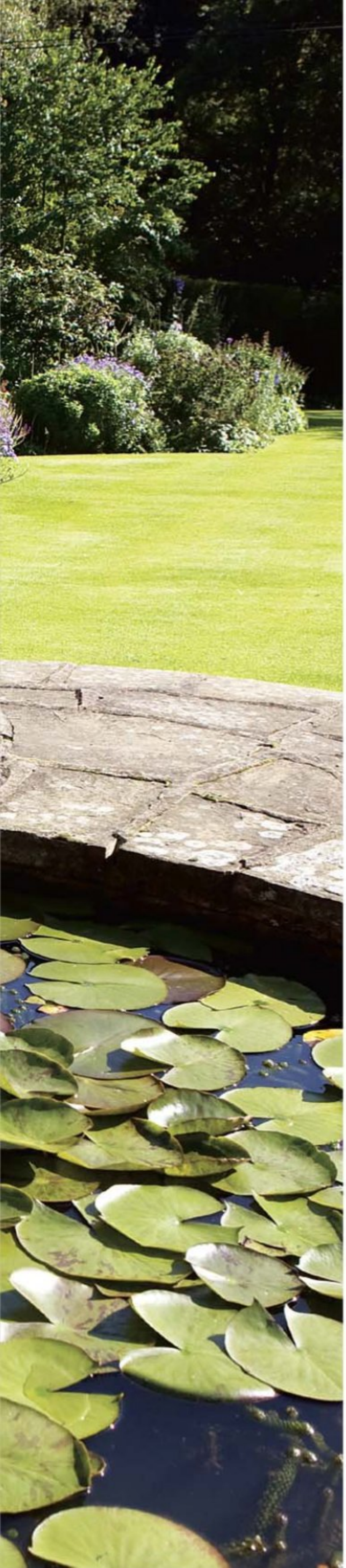
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"I love springtime in the garden when the woodland bulbs are in flower and the rest of the garden is waking up," says Preston Harrison, former businessman-turned-gardener. "There are no flowers out and everything is so fresh." In a few months, the garden will experience its 12th spring. The hard frosty nights of January and February will soften, and green shoots will appear around every corner with the promise of the colour-filled summer to come. The harmonious planting throughout Preston's garden – including rose and clematis arches, dahlias and a variety of shrubs and herbaceous perennial borders – will come to life again, creating vibrant and rich vistas from every viewpoint.

Eleven years ago, the garden was a very different picture; in fact, it didn't exist at all. Then Preston retired from his job as director of Yorkshire's largest roofing company, sold the business, and set himself the new challenge of creating a garden worthy of his pretty stone bungalow near Leeds. "I'd been interested in horticulture for some time but never had the opportunity to actually do it," he says. "So it was a steep learning curve to say the least. There's no way I could have started this before I retired because it's a full-time job."

Although timid to begin with, Preston quickly taught himself the basics and it wasn't long before he was working full steam ahead on the garden, transferring his business determination to his retirement hobby. "At the start, I was frightened of doing things," he says. "I'd go out to a nursery and come back with no plants because the ones I wanted were labelled 'semi shade' and in horticultural terms I didn't know what that meant! But eventually I didn't take as much notice of labels, and realised it's about what works in my garden." Preston joined the Hardy Plant Society, a move he describes as "the single best thing I ever did regarding knowledge."

When it came to designing a layout, Preston had a good idea of what he wanted and spent hours working out vistas, hedges, ponds and a natural woodland area. Different areas of the garden were to be created, separated by yew hedges and punctuated with traditional sculptures. "The idea is that you can't see the whole garden in one go at any particular place," he says. "It's a series of circles; you've got to go around the corner to see what's there." The result is a beautiful English garden with surprises around every pathway, backed by a woodland area where the mature trees of Calverley Wood spill over onto Preston's land. »»»

"I'd been interested in horticulture for some time but never had the opportunity to actually do it. So it was a steep learning curve to say the least"





OPPOSITE A circular pond filled with lily pads enhances the more formal section of the garden. **THIS PAGE** The woodland area is a haven for all sorts of wildlife.

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For the last few years, Preston has opened the garden to the public by appointment through the National Gardens Scheme (NGS). "I like people to discover the garden for themselves," he says. "When I see people's reactions, it makes all the hard work worthwhile."

Preston gives visitors, who sometimes come by the coach load, a tour of the two-acre garden, sharing the knowledge he's gained during the last 11 years – such as how he manages to successfully harmonise colour schemes. "I don't know any man who can colour co-ordinate, and I certainly can't, so what I do is avoid mismatches. For example, in the yellow area, I'm not going to plant any pink flowers!"

Preston has also picked up a few tricks on how to make a small space appear bigger. A grass path leading along the side of the house into the garden is eight inches wider at one end, so a person looking down it would think it was longer than it actually is. Another illusion is created by placing plants with stronger colours at the start of a vista, rather than the end. "If you have strong colours at the end, it really foreshortens the space," says Preston. "It would halve this length, it really is amazing."

Visitors who explore the woodland area will find a variety of plants, from wild strawberries to acers and ferns, as well as an assortment of frogs, birds and other woodland creatures. A fence at the back of the garden keeps out the deer which roam Calverley Woods. Between the wood and the formal garden stand six wooden boxes which Preston uses for his efficient composting system. "All the garden and kitchen waste gets circulated in these boxes until you get compost. Then it goes back into the garden as a mulch to keep the weeds down and retain moisture."

In 11 years, Preston has transformed the once unkempt land into a sophisticated English garden – but the story doesn't end there, as he works every day to keep it up to his high standard. "Any garden is totally unnatural, and you're battling against the biggest thing there is – nature. So you've got to keep tweaking it all the time; it's a full-time job." For now, though, the garden is waiting out the crisp winter months before it bursts back to life to welcome visitors in May.

The garden at The Ranch House, Calverley, is open by appointment from May to August. Log onto: www.ngs.org.uk or call Preston on 0113 257 0114 to arrange a visit.

"The idea is that you can't see the whole garden in one go at any particular place. It's a series of circles; you've got to go round the corner to see what's there"





ABOVE Beautiful specimens can be found around ever corner in Preston's garden. **OPPOSITE** Keeping the plants in check and neatly trimmed is a full-time job – but it pays off!



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STEP INTO *Christmas*

Here at *CFL* we are dreaming of a white Christmas – with vibrant splashes of orange and lime green!

Stylist **Paula Woods and Katie Cotgrave** Photographer **Eleri Griffiths**



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1



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LEFT Antique style glass tree decorations, £9.95 set of 10, Aspen & Brown. **1** Miniature white Christmas tree, from £3.95, Dotcomgiftshop. Pine and eucalyptus candle, £80, pomegranate noir home candle, £38, Jo Malone. Glass heart, £5.99, Lisbeth Dahl. **2** Selection of baubles, from 48p, B&Q. **3** 'Filigree' antique green bauble £5, Heal's. **PREVIOUS PAGE** 2m 'New Foundland' white Christmas tree, £149, The Grosvenor Garden Centre. Glitter lattice (on chair), £2.48, selection of tree decorations and tree garlands, B&Q. Antique-style candle holder, £9.95 each, orange and cinnamon garland (on mantelpiece), £27.95, Louis Ghost chair, £140, Chattels. Lime green lamp, £120, Bhs.

THE FESTIVE TREE...

...decorate with a dazzling array of sparkling and colourful baubles or opt for a miniature alternative.

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THE SEASONAL TABLE ...

...create a tempting display with glittering tableware and colourful accented linen and flowers.





ABOVE & RIGHT Sophie Conran dinner plates, £10.50 each, soup bowls, £9.50 each. 'Linear' tablecloth, £24.99 and runner, £11.99, Dunelm Mill. 'Maya' napkins, £3.99 each, Scandi Living, Radiance' cutlery set, from £59 for 24 piece, Viners. Felt round lime green placemats, £10.50 each, Heal's, 'Malo' clear tumblers, £5.50 each, 'Coro' leaf tumblers, £15 for set of 4, LSA International. Baubles from a selection, B&Q. Mercury silvered tea lights, £16, wooden heart, £xx, Cox & Cox. Victoria Ghost chairs, £135 each, Louis Ghost chair, £140, Chattels. Flowers by Fishlocks Liverpool Flowers. Bauble place card holders, £6.95 set of six, Aspen & Brown.

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LEFT Small orange wreath, £16.95, Aspen & Brown. Glitter bauble, from 48p, B&Q. Silver star, £3.99, Lisbeth Dahl. **1** Eucalyptus and pinecone wreath, £15.95, Dotcomgiftshop. Heart decoration, £1.98, B&Q. **2** Similar oversized bauble, £15, Cox and Cox. **3** Pinecone candles, £8 set of six, Heal's.

DECORATIVE DETAILS ...

...make all the difference, from wreaths and quirky candles to a simple oversized hanging bauble.

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A WARM WELCOME ...

...light tealights or scented candles and add a seasonal message for family and friends.







1 Lime green and orange scented candles: tall, £28, small, £16.95, Melt Candles. Merry xmas bauble, £1.98, B&Q, Gisele Graham wreath, £12.99, The Grosvenor Garden Centre. 'Odile' vase, £32, LSA International. **2** Mercury silvered tea lights, £16, Cox & Cox. **3** 'PEACE' word blocks, £15.99. Cloth-ears. Glitter lattice, £2.48, B&Q. **RIGHT** Printing press stamps, from £3.50 each, Graham & Green. Embroidered linen frieze, £22.95, Aspen & Brown.

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SHORTLIST... TABLEWARE

When it comes to the Christmas table, dress to impress with the latest china.

For stockist details see page 128



FROM TOP Beige and white spotty plates, from £11.95, Berry Red. Vera Wang 'With Love' dinner service, plate, £24, John Lewis. 'Aureus' dinner service, plate from £34.95, Villeroy & Boch. Linea 'Eternal Silhouette' dinner service, plate, from £8, House of Fraser. Vivo 'Lucky Loop' dinner service, plate, £12.95, Vivo. 'Spray Flowers' dinner service, plate, from £3, Cath Kidston.

TOP THREE CHAMPAGNE FLUTES

Celebrate in style with sparkling glassware.



LSA 'Vivi' champagne flutes, £54.88 set of six, Drinkstuff

'Platinum Spiral' flute, £10, John Lewis

'Capri' champagne glasses, from £32 set of four, Habitat

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ALL IN THE **MIX**

Contemporary meets classic in the kitchen of a converted barn thanks to a clever combination of colours and materials. Words **Paula Woods**

When Anita and Justin Randall decided to move their family from Cheshire and take on the conversion of a derelict barn on the Warwickshire border, they knew that they wanted to create a large family kitchen that would not only meet the needs of modern day family living but also be sympathetic to its surroundings. "What we were looking for was a contemporary kitchen with all mod cons, however we still wanted to achieve a more traditional-inspired unfitted finish that would be in keeping with the period of the property," explains Anita.

To this end the couple turned to bespoke kitchen company, Cotteswood. It was managing director and designer Glyn Rodney who came up with the solution of not only using a mix of freestanding and fitted units to create the relaxed kitchen styling Anita and Justin were looking for, but also combining the natural warmth and texture of timber cabinetry with a smart painted finish. Modern shaker doors in clear lacquered maple were suggested as a contrast to the couple's choice of a Moroccan-inspired blue paint finish which flows from the main work area of the kitchen right

A MODERN TWIST IN A TRADITIONAL SETTING, THIS FAMILY KITCHEN-DINER EMBRACES A RELAXED YET CONTEMPORARY FEEL THROUGHOUT.

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GET IT RIGHT... MIX AND MATCH FINISHES

1 COMBINATIONS

Mixing finishes and colours can prove the perfect solution when creating relaxed kitchen styling or bold contemporary statements. To ensure balance and harmony avoid exceeding three colours in a painted scheme or stick to a single timber and one or two colours.

2 ACCENTS

A tried and tested formula is to allow one finish or colour to dominate while the others work as accents. Adding blocks of colour can also be effective when applied to a bank of units such as a run of larder, base or wall units.

3 FURNITURE

Using freestanding contrasting pieces to add colour will prove a less permanent solution for those not wishing to commit to contrasting fixed units.

4 COLOUR

Whites and creams tend to be the most flexible option thanks to their ability to work with any timber or paint shade, while bold, dramatic tones, such as red or on-trend lime green, tend to work better as accents. If mixing softer blues and greens, match base tones and set against warm timber tones.

5 CONTINUITY

Ideally use the same door styles throughout to ensure continuity and in terms of finishing touches opt for matching or co-ordinating handles and trims fashioned from the same materials.





through to the freestanding dresser in the dining area. This again embraces natural maple in the form of a table and chairs, and opting for a sleek, pale timber finish instantly injects a contemporary touch, as does the rather striking choice of pale pink walls and the couple's favoured blue. While a mixture of natural materials from maple and granite worktops to stone flooring, along with freestanding cabinetry, embraces tradition. Contrasting and practical stainless steel appliances were also incorporated to reflect light and lift the room, which being a barn has a fairly restricted natural light source.

In terms of layout the Randalls opted for zoning as defining distinct areas for specific activities works particular well in large spaces and busy family rooms. The kitchen, however, remains at heart a typical country kitchen – and therein lies its success. It is indeed the modern practical family kitchen the Randalls envisaged, but it also takes it cue from the past and embraces its environment.

ADDRESS BOOK:

The bespoke solid maple and painted Shaker kitchen is by Cotteswood and features South African Black granite worktops. **Visit: www.cotteswood.co.uk or tel. 01608 641858 / 644620**

The kitchen units are painted in 'Blue Ground' by Farrow and Ball. **Visit: www.farrow-ball.com or tel. 01202 876 141.**

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73 CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Compiled by **Katie Cotgrave** Assisted by **Jenny Quinn**

STYLISH CHRISTMAS

Start the New Year in style with the latest accessories for the home.

TOP FROM LEFT 'U+ Livroche' bookstand, £75, Amaroni. Cashmere wool throw, £470, L and B London. Acrylic Noel decoration £12.50, John Lewis. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** 'Hobart' candlestick, from £35, Heal's. Bouquet clock, £44, Hidden Art Shop. Red Vision globe, £160 The Conran Shop. Papier mache stag head, £95, Rockett St George **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** Andrew Martin 'Alphabet' Side Table, £900, Occa Home. Normann Copenhagen swing vases, from £19, Red Candy. 'Etro' cushions, from £215, Selfridges. Queens head mirror, £29.31, Hidden Art Shop.























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COOK'S CHRISTMAS

Eat, drink and be merry with our hand-picked culinary treats.

TOP FROM LEFT 'Grand Siecle' by Lauren-Perrier, from £120, Harvey Nichols. Jan Constantine mug, £7.10, McLaggan Smith Mugs. 'Cactus' fruit bowls by Marta Sansoni, from £48, Alessi. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** 'Illycaffè Francis Francis x 7' coffee machine, £174, Espresso Crazy. Evening and weekend tuition courses in health conscious cuisine, from £40, Can Cook Courses (sessions run until March 2010 at Unit 20, The Matchworks, Speke Road L19 2PH). **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'Art Deco' psychedelic kettle, £60, Meyer Group. 'Cooking For Christmas', £14.99, Garden Trading. 'Taste Of Italy' gift box, £124.95, Luigi's.

















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HER CHRISTMAS

An inspirational selection of enticing treats for women of all ages.

TOP FROM LEFT 2010 diary, £9, Cath Kidston. 'U+Vela' jewellery tree, £55, Amaroni. 'Amazona' personal organisers, from £69, Filofax. Vintage Georgian child mannequin, £595, Bombarock. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** Pine and Eucalyptus deluxe candle, £80, Jo Malone. 'Lolita' shopoholic wine glass, £16, John Lewis. 'Baylis & Harding' toiletry set, £15, Bhs. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'Aristoc' hot water bottle cover and sock, £15, House of Fraser. Pink mouse, £29.99, Motormouse. Cath Kidston radio, £199.95, John Lewis.



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HIS CHRISTMAS

Great gifts and gadgets for the man who has everything.

TOP FROM LEFT Obama candles, £29.95 set of three, Selfridges. 'Jeeves' light, £185, 'Wooster' light, £195, Hidden Art Shop. Four classic wooden puzzles, £10, Bhs. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** 'Savile' modern briefcase, £155, Filofax. Magnetic chess and backgammon set, £49.95, Graham and Green. Office golf set, £35, The Conran Shop. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'Around The Clock' clock, £17.95, The Conran Shop. 'Lexcon Tykho' rubber radio, £40, Heal's. Wooden shoeshine kit, £25, Marks & Spencer.



















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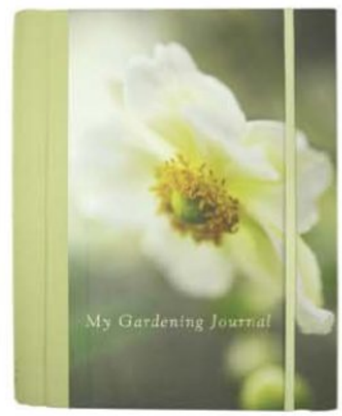
GARDENER'S CHRISTMAS

Check out our festive treats, perfect for all those green fingers.

TOP FROM LEFT 'I'm In The Garden' gift bucket, £13.95, Aspen & Brown. Mini bird houses, £12.95 set of three, The Original Gift Company. 'My Gardening Journal', £14.95, Getting Personal. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** Kitchen garden box, £9.99, Garden Trading. Gardener's treats, £15.95, Colloco. 'Duchy' small tool set, £45, Burford. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'Celia Birtwell' watering can, £34.95, Berry Red. Gardener's skincare gift set, £12.95, John Lewis. Gardener's mug and lid, £5, Sainsbury's.



















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ETHICAL CHRISTMAS

Treat both loved-ones and the planet with eco-savvy presents.

TOP FROM LEFT 'Angora' blanket, £95 each, Luma. 'Solio' solar phone and iPod charger, £59.99, Greenstamp. 'Stella' tabletop centrepiece, £72, Love Eco. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** 'Madras' notebooks, £8.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop. Fairtrade spa set, £90, Biome Lifestyle. 'Kandinsky' cushion, £32, Fairwind. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'La Boheme' reusable bag, £5.99, Envirosax. Pink tartan tree clip (plus a tree planted on your behalf in Scotland), £15, Tree Twist. 'Elm' cheese board and knife, £65, Ecocentric.











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'Golden Age' from Missoni Home

MISSONI HOME at curve

Looking for a little inspiration this Christmas?

A gift from the Missoni Home Collections makes a fantastic present for anyone who would appreciate a touch of luxury in their home. The beautifully indulgent metallics of the 'Golden Age' accessories are perfect for the season and come beautifully presented in branded packaging. Curve carry popular items in stock and are taking orders now in time for Christmas.

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KID'S CHRISTMAS

Children will love our selection of must-have toys and gifts.

TOP FROM LEFT 'Funky Red Cat' cushion, £35, Hunkydory Home. Rocking horse, £105, Bobo Kids. Map of Great Britain jigsaw, £30, Objects Of Design. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** Chrome retro racer, £780, Punkin Patch. 'Hungry Caterpillar' selection, from £6.99, Strawberry Fool. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** 'Zoo' wooden skittles, £18, Habitat. 'My First Christmas' snow globe, £15, Mamas & Papas. Sewing kit, £25, Aspace.

















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STOCKING FILLERS

Fill up that festive sack with some fantastic gifts under £15.

TOP FROM LEFT Oriental candles, £6.49 each, Yankee Candle. 'Build Your Own Lamborghini' gift set, £7.95, Getting Personal. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** 'James The Bookend', £14.95, Mooch. Padded coat hanger, £10, Cath Kidston. Colour changing ducks, £7, for set of three, Roman At Home. Russian doll hooks, £8.99, Beautifulthings. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** Christmas reindeer tins, £9.99 set of three, Lakeland. 'The Large Christmas Box', £12, Chocolate On Chocolate. Bright alphabet letters, from £3.95, Pedlars.











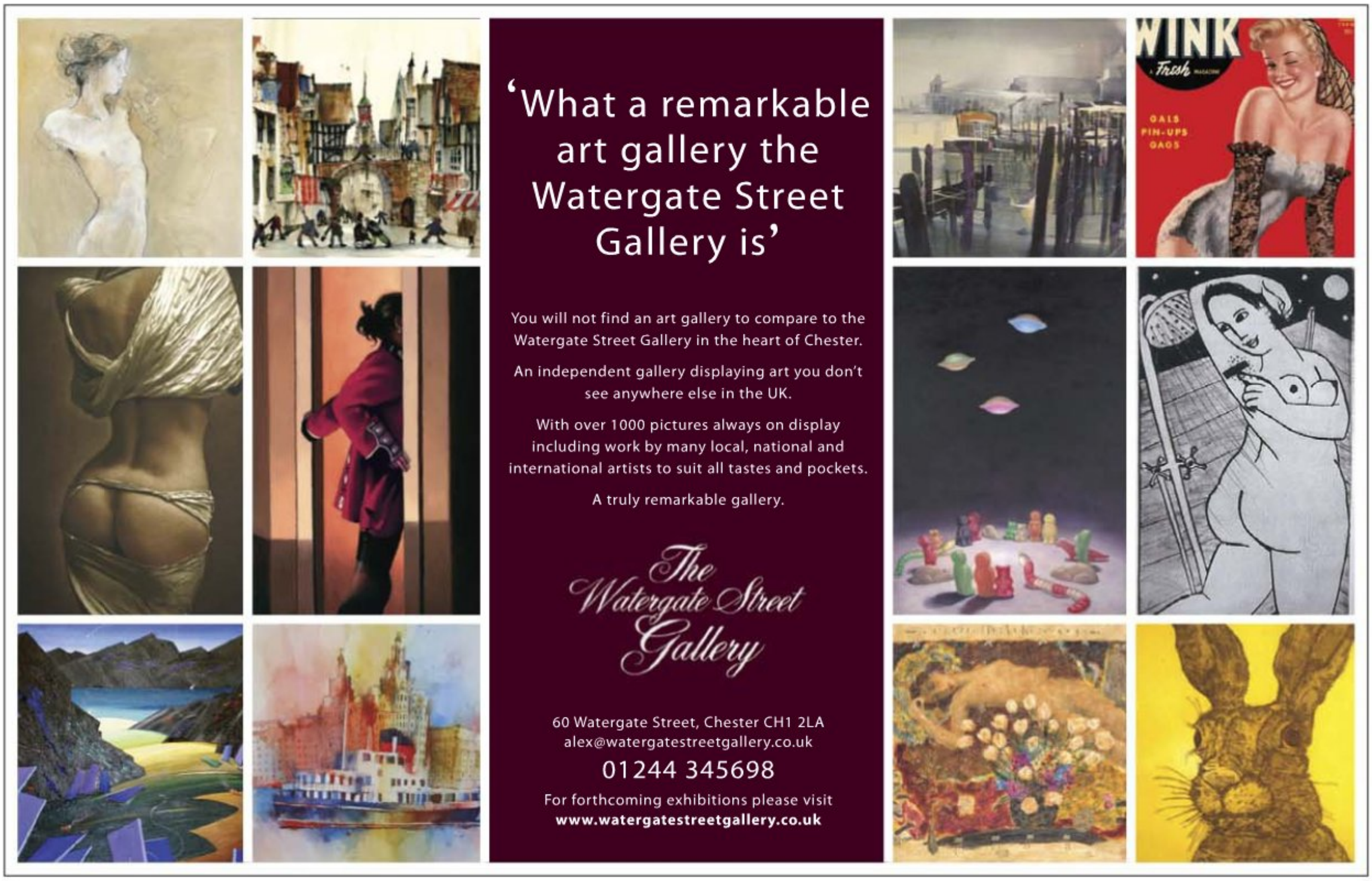


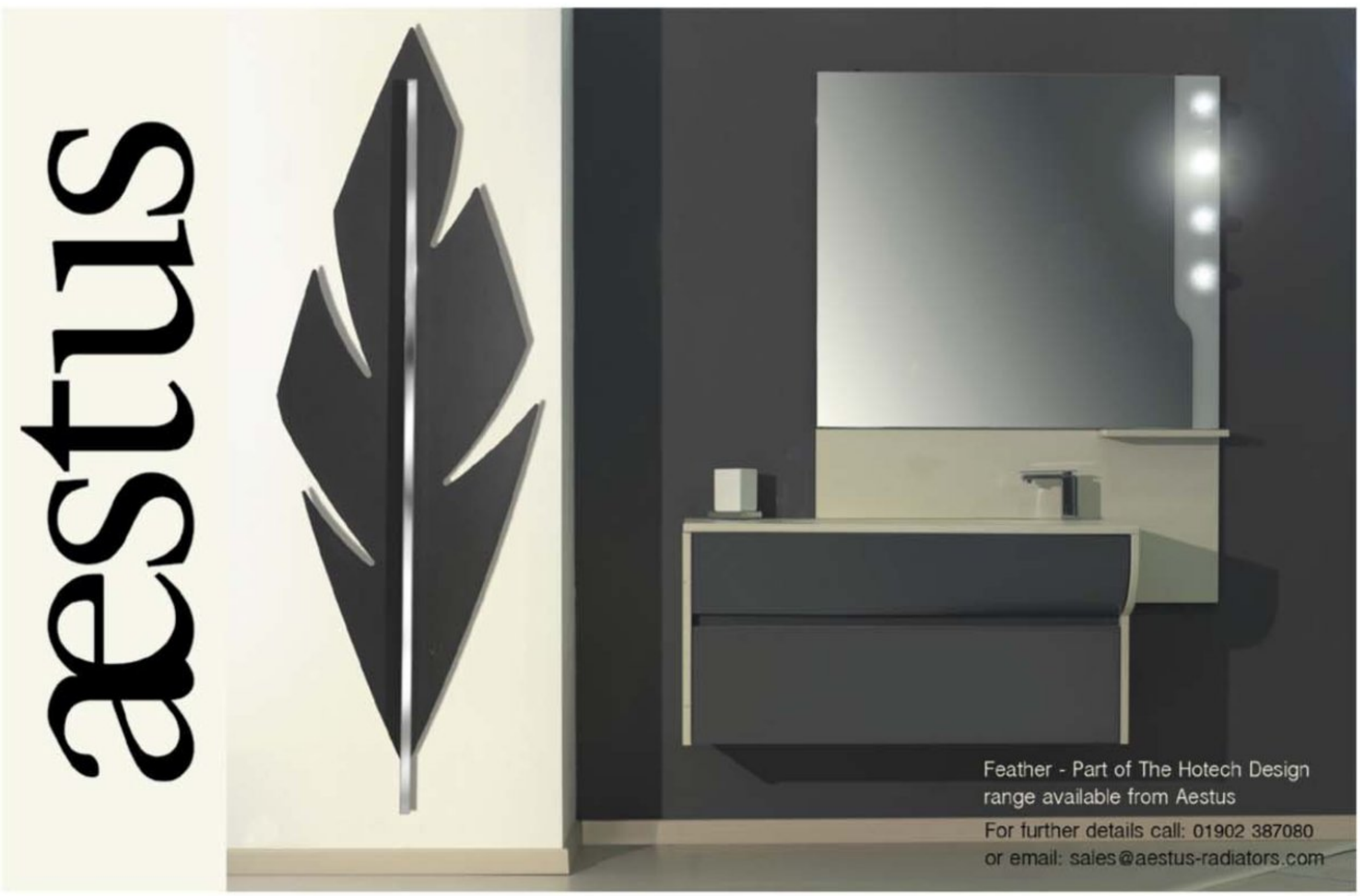






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'Single Row Cord' pillowcase, from £15 per pair, double duvet, £25, 'Odessa' stitched satin cushions, £25 each, and quilt from £130.

Compiled by **Katie Cotgrave**

LUXURIOUS LINEN

For an instant update in the bedroom look to the latest linens. From subtle stripes and sleek finishes to fabulous florals and vibrant colour there really is something to suit every taste.

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BEDROOM SOLUTIONS

BOLD BRIGHTS







NATURAL STRIPES







BOLD BRIGHTS FROM TOP 'Klimt' bed linen by Clarissa Hulse, from £75, House Of Fraser. 'Tom' Bed linen, from £25, Heal's. Pleated ribbon single bed linen set, £45 (pillowcase and duvet cover), M&S. **NATURAL STRIPES FROM TOP** 'Mallow' organic bedlinen by John Rocha, from £12, Debenhams. 'Milano' double duvet cover, £85, Dorma. 'Holkham' pillowcase, £18 and single duvet cover, £60, Peacock Blue.

For stockist details see page 128

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BEDROOM SOLUTIONS

SILKY SATINS







FLORAL CHIC







SILKY SATINS FROM TOP Corded satin bed linen, from £10, John Lewis. 'Pearl' duvet cover, from £55, oxford pillowcase, £10, 'Boutique' round cushion, £20, satin cushion, £15, gold throw, £80, Bhs. 'Taffeta' throw, from £50, cushion, £12, Next.
FLORAL CHIC FROM TOP 'Bouquet' pillowcase £12 (duvet cover, £45), 'Sherbert Stripe' bed linen, from £12, bedspread, £135, wool blanket, £75, Cath Kidston. 'Amelia' bed linen, from £25, Feather & Black. 'Garden' pillowcase, £11, and single duvet £29, white throw, £75, La Redoute.

For stockist details see page 128

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'Khasikov' Roman blind in moss, from £270 for a blind 60cm x 100cm, Eclectics

WINDOW SHOPPING

Whether looking to shut out those dark winter nights, create a little privacy or simply filter daylight, stylish shutters and blinds provide the perfect window treatment when it comes to creating a chic contemporary finish.

Compiled by **Caroline Jones**

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SHUTTERLY STYLISH

Say farewell to net curtains and opt for a set of statement shutters – be it café, tiered or full height.

For stockist details see page 128



1



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1 Shaped painted shutters, from £260 per sq m, The Shutter Shop. **2** Custom-made wood slat shutters, from £290 per sq m, Draks. **3** Bespoke leather shutters, from £955 per sqm, The New England Shutter Company. **4** Solid shutters, from £300 per sq m, Shutters Inc. **5** Acrylic shutters, £310 per sq m, American Shutters.

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SARAH QUILLIAM, HILLARYS

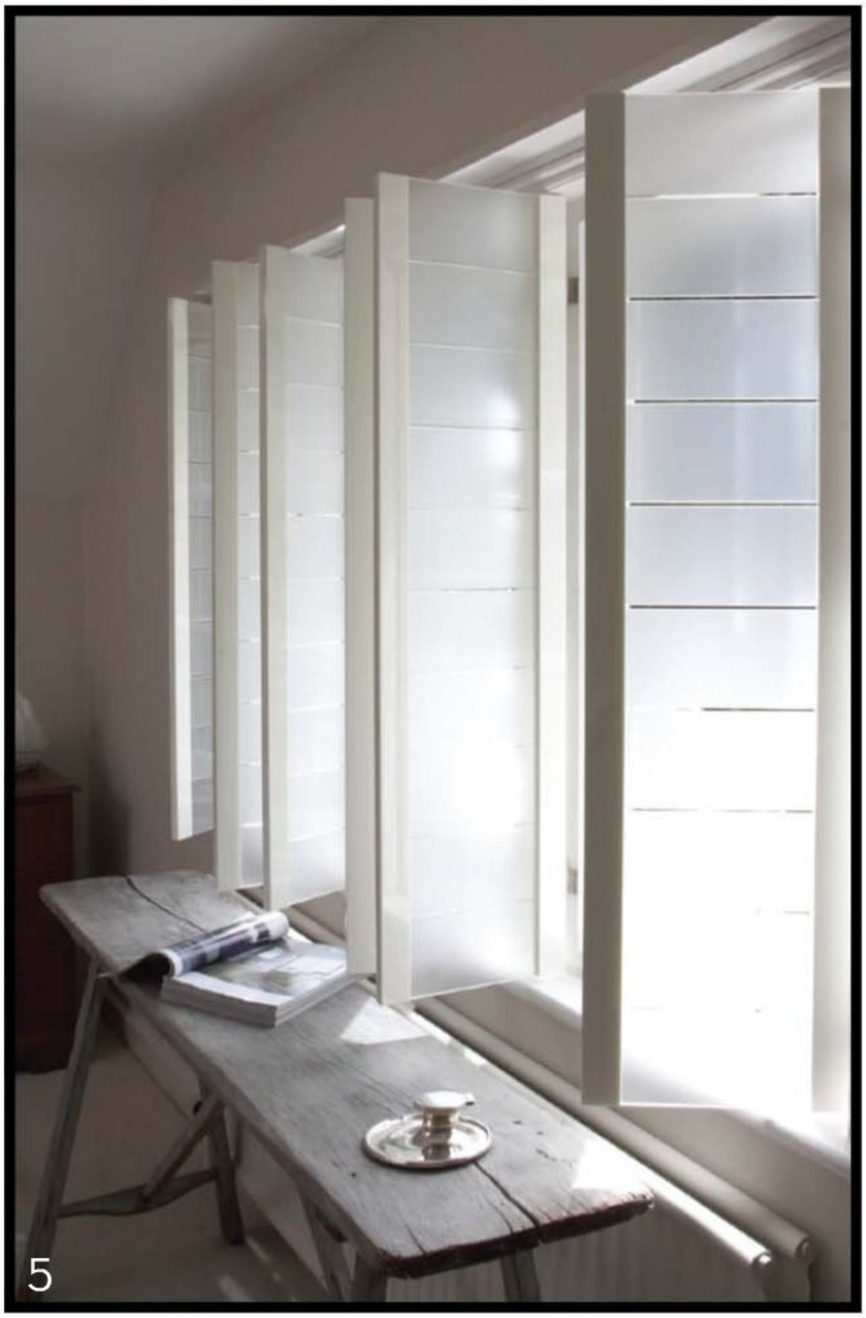




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BLIND PASSION

Roman or roller, vertical or horizontal – the right blind is sure to make your windows stand out in style.

For stockist details see page 128



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1 'Spectrum' roller blind, £95, Digetex. **2** 'Tahiti Khaki' Roman blind, from £41, Hillarys. **3** Made-to-order 'Ono' vertical blind, £125 for a 1.2m x 1.2m blind, New House Textiles. **4** 'Bottom-up' blind in fuschia, from £184 for a 60cm x 80cm blind, Eclectics. **5** Wooden black gloss Venetian blind, from £118, Novatec.

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WE LOVE SHOPPING AT... CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Nothing makes you feel more festive than wandering around a Christmas market: mulled wine, roasting chestnuts, wooden chalets. And the best bit is you can do your Christmas shopping while you're enjoying yourself – it beats hitting the high street with a thousand other grumpy shoppers on a Saturday afternoon. So to help you have the most fun possible Christmas shopping, we've picked the best festive markets in the North. Wrap up warm and head to one near you now!



Fancy a market with a definite design twist?

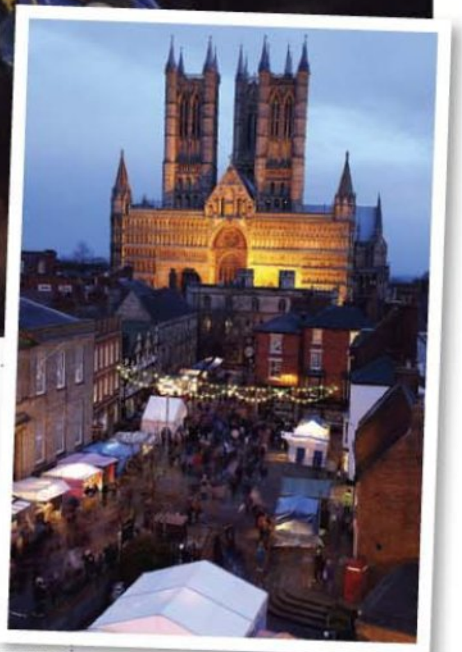
Then head to Un-fold's Christmas craft and design market at The Shakespeare Centre, Kendal, Lake District, 4-6 December. The market showcases local design talent such as Caroline Nash crafts, Jo Vincent glass designers and Rachel Kelly hand-printed wallpaper.

Visit: www.un-fold.co.uk for details.

MANCHESTER EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET

BEST FOR EUROPEAN TREATS AND SWEETS
WHEN 18 NOVEMBER-21 DECEMBER 2009
WHERE ALBERT SQUARE

The open-air market in Manchester's Albert Square offers numerous chic wooden chalets set up around the Town Hall. Thanks to its Christmas trees, lights and mince pies the market has a lovely festive atmosphere. It offers one-off crafts, jewellery and bags, plus treats and sweets from all over Europe. Head here to do your Christmas shopping and who knows what else you might see – last year there was a giant talking reindeer sat atop one of the chalets.



LINCOLN CHRISTMAS MARKET

BEST FOR FAMILIES
WHEN 3-6 DECEMBER 2009
WHERE CATHEDRAL QUARTER, LINCOLN

The 300 stalls that make up Lincoln's Christmas market sit in the medieval square between the city's Norman castle and magnificent gothic cathedral –the perfect setting for a festive shopping expedition. As well as a fine array of gifts and treats on offer there is also a Winter Wonderland area that will keep the kids happy, thanks to family fun rides, activities and entertainment for the under 12s. And for the first time ever this year there will be a Santa's grotto.

Make a festive weekend of it with a two-day coach trip, which includes one night in a B&B, entry to Warwick Castle to see traditional decorations being made and a visit to Worcester's Victorian Christmas Fayre. Priced from £89.

Visit www.christmasmarkets.com/UK to find out more.



YORK ST NICHOLAS FAYRE

BEST FOR LOCAL ARTS AND CRAFTS
WHEN 26-29 NOVEMBER 2009
WHERE PARLIAMENT STREET, ST SAMPSONS SQUARE, COPPERGATE

York's Christmas market has been running since 1992 and attracts thousands of visitors. The outside stalls in Parliament Street, St Sampsons Square and Coppergate specialise in gifts, craft and local farm produce, while inside York's impressive medieval Guild Hall you will find 'Made In Yorkshire' artists and crafters. Medieval townhouse, Barley Hall, offers a special medieval market with live crafting and St William's College has an arts and craft market boasting fine hand-made items – perfect for a unique gift.

ERDDIG CHRISTMAS MARKET

BEST FOR LIVE MUSIC AND ATMOSPHERE
WHEN 5-20 DECEMBER 2009
WHERE ERDDIG, WREXHAM

Erddig, a National Trust property in North Wales, is a country house and estate with large gardens, park, restaurant, National Trust shop and woodlands. There are over 30 stalls in the grounds on each of the three weekends in the run up to Christmas. Cute wooden chalets offer handmade jewellery, toys, glassware and leatherwork, and you'll be able to tempt your taste buds with hot mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, breads, pastries and chocolates – all to live music.

BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET & CRAFT FAIR

BEST FOR AUTHENTIC GERMAN FOOD AND DRINK
WHEN 12 NOVEMBER-23 DECEMBER 2009
WHERE VICTORIA SQUARE AND NEW STREET

Over two million visitors head to Birmingham's Christmas market – the largest authentic German Christmas market outside Germany or Austria. The 180 stalls offer unusual and handmade gifts, from candles to ceramics, glasswork to jewellery. You will also find traditional German items such as wooden toys and marionettes, plus delicious German food to sample including Glühwein (mulled wine), grilled sausages, German beer, gingerbread men, marzipan sweets and freshly baked German breads and pastries.

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DECORATION



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THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS TREE

Keep it real this Christmas and take home an eco-friendly living tree – just follow our top tips for a lasting festive and fragrant focal point.



1 When choosing a real tree check for a good shape, dense branches and glossy needles. A fresh tree will have flexible branches and pliable needles – a gentle shake will establish whether needles are shedding and you should avoid trees with brittle branches.

2 Norway Spruce is the nation's favourite tree, however it does tend to shed its needles. If you hate hoovering-up those pine needles then consider a Nordmann Fir, Noble Fir or Scots Pine as these all tend to retain their needles, where the Fraser pine is favoured for its classic tiered shape.

3 Fresh trees, whether cut or potted, will require regular watering throughout the festive season to prevent shrivelling.

4 To ensure your cut tree last as long as possible cut 2cm from the base of the trunk to allow the tree to take in more water. Mount in a water-holding stand away from heat or direct sunlight and water regularly – you will usually need to top up your stand every day as a cut tree can drink up to a gallon of water a day.

5 If your cut tree is set within a block of wood, place a bowl of water at the base of the tree so that the air around the tree remains moist. Alternatively, if possible, place the entire block in a bucket or bowl of water and treat as for a cut tree.

6 Rooted trees can be purchased ready potted or with a bare root ball. Bare roots should be soaked well before being planted in moist soil. All potted trees should be watered regularly to keep the soil moist and kept away from direct heat.

7 Before decorating your tree check out its shape. If you are not completely happy then consider carefully pruning back the odd branch – cut on an angle to disguise cut ends. Adding lights while lit will help gauge whether they are evenly distributed and always stand back at regular intervals when hanging baubles to ensure an even spread.

8 Once the festivities are over, don't forget to recycle your tree – many local councils provide a collection date for cut trees or they can be taken to a recycling centre. Opt for a potted tree and it can be simply added to your garden scheme.



OPPOSITE 100% UK grown cut Christmas tree, from £9.99 for a Norway Spruce, £19.99 for a Needlelast tree, decorations, lights, garland and crackers, all Homebase. **ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT** Three of the most popular Christmas trees: Nordmann Fir, Norway Spruce, Frazer Fir. To find out more about choosing and caring for trees, plus a list of growers in your area check out the British Christmas Tree Growers Association. Visit: www.christmastree.org.uk. **TOP** 'Nordmann Fir fairtrade Christmas tree, from £35, LoveEco.

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Daisy...... Daisy......











elephant designer beanbags

Oversized and generously filled, Elephant beanbags definitely live up to their name and are a cost-effective way of injecting funky colour and designer prints into kids' bedrooms, family rooms, games rooms and teenage dens. Go for a single splash or group two or three together for a paint-box effect – Elephants look even better in herds! These versatile seating solutions are great for parties and sleepovers, providing soft support for all the family in durable, wipe-clean fabrics. Better yet, the Jumbos weigh in at a mighty 140cm x 180cm.

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www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk elephant™

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Stylist **Katie Cotgrave**
Photographer **Eleri Griffiths**

TEN OF THE **BEST** BAUBLES

Brighten up your tree this Christmas with the latest dazzling decorations. From twinkling stars to chic hearts celebrate this year in style.

FROM LEFT Gisele Graham tree, £44.99, The Grosvenor Garden Centre. Large green bauble, £3.99 per pair, Sainsbury's. Glitter lattice bauble, £2.48, B&Q. Christmas tree decoration, £2, Next. Gingham heart, £3, John Lewis. Glitter dove, £2, Bhs. Glitter pear, £6, Heal's. Hanging dancer, £5.50, Wonky Bunny. Black 3D star, £3, Paperchase. Silver angel, £5.25 per pair, Not On The High Street. Coloured graduated baubles, £7.50 for 4, Cox and Cox.

For stockist details see page 128

Find more magazines at www.MagazinesDownload.com

Compiled by Jennie Musgrove

DISCOVERY **SPACE**

In this month's Discovery Space we talk to Paperchase head buyer, Nicola Saunders, take a closer look at an iconic 1930s vase and reveal the best place for Christmas shopping in Manchester.

For stockists see page 128.





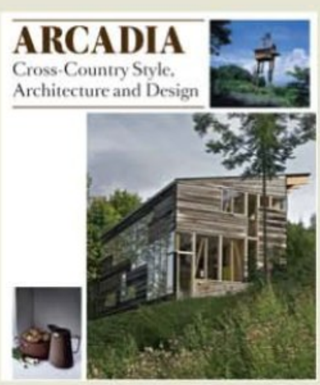


WORTH A VISIT
Manchester Craft and Design Centre

Dubbed 'Manchester's hidden gem' by those in the know, Manchester Craft and Design Centre is located on a quiet street in the city's trendy Northern Quarter and is the place to visit if you're seeking an original gift or one-off design. Situated in the former Victorian Fish and Poultry Market, the centre houses 19 studio boutiques from which talented artists and designer-makers produce and sell their contemporary work to the public. Work ranges from jewellery and accessories to clothing and furniture as well as lighting, ceramics, photography and painting.

Also in the centre is a pretty café serving delicious homemade food and an exhibition space where the work of designers from further a-field is showcased in special exhibitions. The latest, *Distinction*, features monochromatic ceramics, glass and textiles by seven designer makers including Annette Bugansky, Sara Flynn and Nitin Goyal. Be sure to pop in if you happen to be in Manchester this December!

Entrance to Manchester Craft and Design Centre is free. Opening times are 10am to 5.30pm, Monday to Saturday. During December the Centre is also open Thursdays until 8pm and Sundays 11am to 5pm. The *Distinction* exhibition is on until 23rd January 2010.



BOOKMARK
Arcadia: Cross-country Style, Architecture and Design

Edited by R. Klanten, S. Ehmann, L. Feireiss

In Greek mythology Arcadia was a pristine, remote idyll in which mankind lived in harmony with nature, free of burdens and responsibilities. In today's world of overpopulated cities and hectic lifestyles, such a notion can seem like an impossible dream, but this new book from Gestalten showcases the ways in which living in harmony with nature can be achieved in contemporary life.

Featuring beautiful photography and concise yet comprehensive descriptions, *Arcadia* takes readers on a journey through a collection of alpine and rural architecture and interior design projects by architects, designers and artists. It features both traditional and progressive examples of properties that adapt to their surrounding habitats; from private mountain-top homes to hotel lodges nestled in the forest landscape. A thought-provoking reference for contemporary architecture and design inspired by nature, *Arcadia* is high on *CFL*'s Christmas wish list this year!

Published by Gestalten. Available now. Price: £37.50. www.gestalten.com





Find more magazines at www.MagazinesDownload.com





ON OUR RADAR
Nicola Saunders

For over 30 years, Paperchase has dominated the marketplace as one of the leading brands in design-led innovative stationary, and now has more than 100 outlets in the UK. As head buyer, Nicola Saunders has an expert eye for finding inspiring new designs. We chat to her to find out a little more about the people behind the products.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
As a buyer I am always on the look out for new ideas. My current project is to source ranges for a new concept department at our flagship store on Tottenham Court Road, London. I am working on several ranges including beautiful handmade exercise books, fine porcelain objects and vintage artefacts.

WHAT'S THE LAST THING YOU SAW THAT REALLY INSPIRED YOU?
The Shop at Bluebird, London, a most aspirational mix of fashion, shoes and gifts, all displayed in a fantastic setting of vintage furniture to bring the collection together. And there is a huge light bulb installation that is amazing!

WHO WOULD YOU INVITE TO YOUR DREAM DINNER PARTY?
Mary Portas, Vivienne Westwood, Alan Carr, Tom Dixon, Mark Owen, Louis Theroux and of course a dinner party would not be complete without my best friend Mark!

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?
Pottering along the Chamberlayne Road in Kensal Rise, London, buying fresh flowers, and eating great food at my favourite pub of the moment, The Chamberlayne. The chicken is exquisite!

WHAT'S THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE EVER READ?
Rastamouse and Da Bag-a Bling – it's my four year-old daughter Ruby's favourite book! Written by Michael De Souza in rhyme and a Caribbean accent, they are great fun to read out loud. Red-hot reggae, happenin' hip hop, big bags of bling and mysterious missing mice.

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE, AND WHY?
Stella McCartney – the most inspirational working mum. With three children she still has time to work on her successful brand designing clothes we all aspire to owning and she always looks fabulous.

CITY OR COUNTRYSIDE?
City, but I'd like a bit of both. The city for its energy, constant inspiration and the convenience, but I love weekends away visiting friends and enjoying long walks in the country. Some calm and nature before heading back to the buzz.

MODERN OR VINTAGE?
For modern my Marc Jacobs wedges are still my most favourite pair of shoes. And vintage would have to be the Florence Knoll coffee table. I also love the baby Lou Lou Ghost chairs in pink and lilac in Ruby's bedroom, so gorgeous and perfect for a design-conscious four year-old!

AUTUMN OR SPRING?
Autumn for the clothes, I love wearing black opaque tights and winter shoes. I also love the build up to Christmas; buying cards and presents and wrapping everything in Paperchase paper of course! And autumn is perfect for entertaining so we have plenty of friends round for long, lazy Sunday lunches and cosy (sometimes raucous) dinner parties.

CATS OR DOGS?
Dogs – I'm allergic to cats!

www.paperchase.co.uk

FROM TOP Black glitter chandelier decoration £4.50. Pink botanical portrait album, £18.75, Paperchase. Decoration Russian doll £6. **Paperchase** 213 Tottenham Court Road London W1. **T** 020 7467 6200 for stockists and enquiries. **Mail Order** 0161 839 1500

CLASSIC SPACE
The Aalto Vase

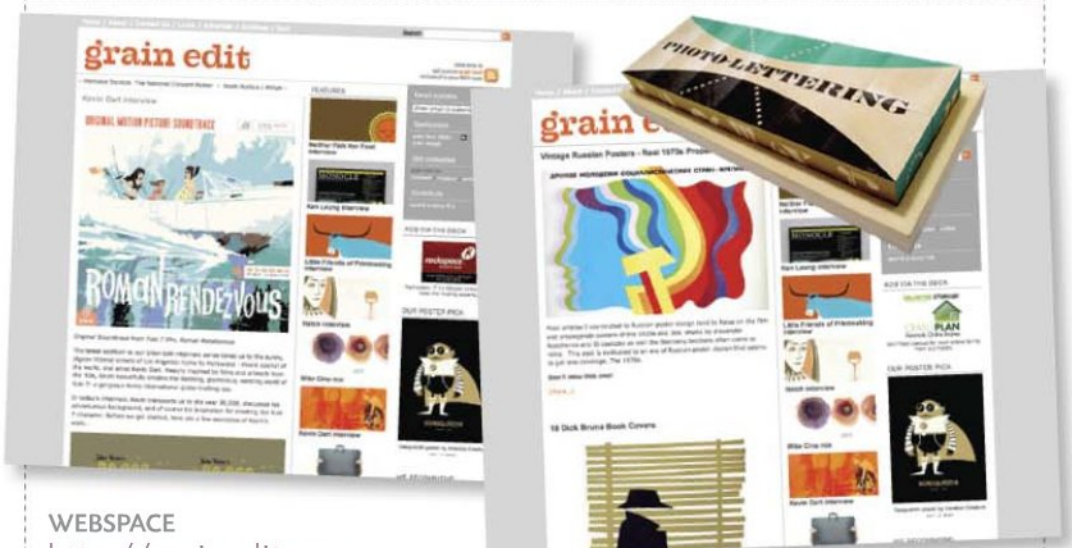
Serenely beautiful yet daringly different, this iconic vase was created in 1937 by Finnish designer Hugo Alvar Henrik Aalto for a competition at the Paris World's Fair. Originally named The Savoy Vase after the Savoy restaurant in Helsinki, Aalto's home town, the vase later became known simply as the Aalto which translates as 'wave' from Finnish.

The inspiration behind the vase's mysterious shape has been the subject of much speculation. Some say it is based on Aalto's sketches entitled 'The Eskimo Woman's Leather Breeches', while others believe that the fluid shape might represent the Finnish landscape.



INVESTMENT BUY
Alvar Aalto Vase White (15cm), £99, The Conran Shop
www.conranshop.co.uk

GET THE LOOK
STJÄLK vase (16cm), £6.99, Ikea
www.ikea.com



WEBSPACE
http://grainedit.com

CFL just loves Grain Edit, a website dedicated to mid-century graphic design and its contemporary disciples. Featuring classic design work from the 1950s to the 1970s, the site is a must-visit for discerning culture aficionados seeking a kick of inspiration. From their base in Oakland, California, the small team hand-pick vintage brochures, illustrations, stamps, children's books, posters and artwork for the blog-style homepage. There are also in-depth interviews with leading designers, desktop wallpapers to download and the occasional prize giveaway – so what are you waiting for?

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BACKSTAGE AT MELT

From a barn in Lancashire, Melt produces deliciously fragranced, beautifully textured candles. Melting wax to create a candle may sound simple, but as *CFL* found out, it's anything but!

Words **Jennie Musgrove** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**







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WAXING LYRICAL







1 FINDING A FRAGRANCE

The Melt team keeps up-to-date with the latest fashions in fragrances so that when it comes to creating a new one, they know what's right. "We never stop researching the fragrance market and looking forward all the time to emerging trends from the specialist perfume houses," says founder Cheryl Hook. "The candles that we make are really just a vehicle for our perfumes and the quality of materials is vital to the end product. It's a bit like cooking: the better the quality of the ingredients, the better the end result!"

2 PERFECT PERFUMES

"Our perfumes are produced especially for us by fragrance houses, and we work with several different ones as some are brilliant at producing florals, while others are better with woods and spices," says Cheryl. Creating a fragrance is a complex task, and getting one right can take anything from eight weeks to more than two years. "Our sense of smell is linked to the part of the brain which governs memory, mood and emotion, so we want to make sure that our fragrances help create good emotions."

3 THE SMELL TEST

Even when Cheryl has perfected a fragrance, smell is subjective and it might still get a bad reaction from someone – so she tries it out on people. "We involve all the staff when we reach the final stages of developing a perfume, and often any willing friends or regular customers who we can persuade to join in! It's really important to see someone's face when they smell a fragrance for the first time as it often tells you so much more than they might describe in words. You can't escape that 'yuck!' look!"







7 WASTED WAX

Nothing is ever wasted at Melt, and if something goes wrong in the production stages, the wax is simply melted down and the process started again. If the wax proves difficult to reuse for any reason, Cheryl has one or two other alternatives to simply throwing it out. "We've supplied wax scraps to Rossendale dry ski slope. It smells great now – people ski on it and wonder what the gorgeous smell is!"

8 THE STATS

- A team of just nine people at Melt produce approximately 2000 candles per week.
- It took Cheryl 12 months of experimenting to create the distinctive texture of a Melt candle.
- There are currently 28 different Melt fragrances which come in ten standard sizes, with the option of a further four very large sizes.
- The price of a standard Melt candle is between £7.50 and £28, and £38 upwards for larger sizes.
- Melt candles are sold online and in 650 outlets across the UK and Ireland, as well as internationally.

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4 COLOUR EXPERIMENTS

Melt uses dyes specially formulated for using in wax. "There's no rulebook on this, you just have to find out as you go along," says Cheryl. "It looks like we use a wide range of colours, but we probably only use eight or ten different colourways, just in different strengths. Also, the fragrance affects the way the colour turns. That's why we always start with the fragrance – because by the time you've finished it, it's almost obvious what colour it should be."

5 POURING WAX

The fragrance has been perfected and the colour chosen – it's now time to mix all the ingredients and melt the wax, ready for pouring into moulds. The wax is heated until it's just above melting point, so as not to damage the perfumes. "We largely use essential oils, and if they are kept at high temperatures for long periods of time, it will alter the state of them," says Cheryl. "The only frustration is that it takes a while for the wax to melt." The wax is then poured into upside-down moulds and left to set for up to 36 hours.

6 LEVELLING

The wax has cooled and is ready to be taken out of its mould. There's just one last thing to do – make sure it stands up straight! "We use a cutter to level the candles, but sometimes it can shatter the wax because it's quite brittle," says Cheryl, who devised a surprising solution for this problem. "The candles are often levelled on a burger grill. I used to do it with an iron!"



9 THE END PRODUCT

The finished candles are lined up on shelves, ready to be checked for quality of perfume, colour and texture, before the signature Melt label and beads are wrapped around them. The label features the top notes of the fragrance as well as a signature quote or phrase to complement the candle. The candles are wrapped in tissue, protected with bubble wrap and packaged into boxes. They are then distributed to shops, individual customers and corporate events.



MEET THE MANAGER

Cheryl Hook founded Melt ten years ago with a friend, when her passion for fragrances led her to experimenting with wax at home. Dissatisfied with the choice and quality of candles on the market, Cheryl decided to take matters into her own hands. "I had a moment when I thought, 'It can't be that difficult', and proceeded to make a mess in the kitchen," she says. "The first candles I made looked hideous but they smelt nice because I used pure essential oils."

Undeterred by the difficulty of making candles that not only smelt nice but also looked beautiful, Cheryl carried on experimenting and started giving her candles as gifts at Christmas. "Someone suggested that we should have a stall at a Christmas fair in Burnley so we took a random selection of whatever I'd thrown into moulds."

The candles proved popular at the fair, and it wasn't long before Cheryl and her business partner began hosting very successful house parties. "We realised that there was a market for what we were doing, and started looking for somewhere we could produce the candles more faithfully."

After a brief spell in a friend's garage, Cheryl moved the business to a barn in Waddington, Lancashire, and Melt has been producing candles from here ever since. "We never intended for it to be a business supplying to shops, it was only ever just a hobby," says Cheryl. "But it seems to have caught people's imagination, and it's nice to be able to go to the trade shows and feel proud of it."

Visit: www.themeltco.com or call 01200 443 377 to find out more about Melt candles.

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WHAT'S **ON**

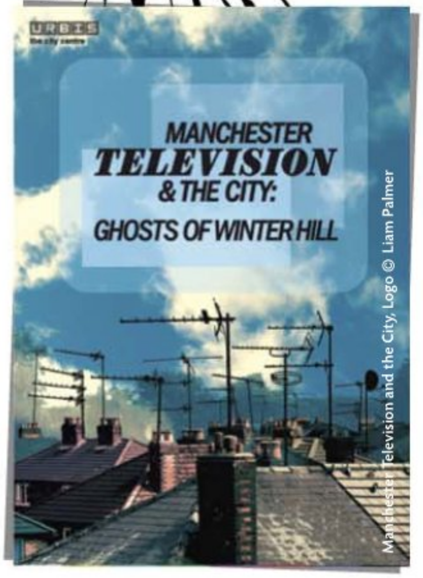
Our guide to the must-see exhibitions in the North this winter – from a Berlin Wall retrospective to photographs of comedians from the National Portrait Gallery.



© Richard Freestone, 'Lawrencefield', Shot Up North 2009



© Darren Burdell, 'Child's Play', Shot Up North 2009



Manchester Television and the City, Logo © Liam Palmer



Christopher P Baker, 'Urban Echo'

SHOT UP NORTH

Matt & Phreds Jazz Club, Manchester
Tel. 0161 831 7002
www.mattandphreds.com
Admission: Usually free, £5 on Friday and Saturday
Open Mon to Sat, see website for listings
Until 31st December 2009

Twenty-one years ago, Salford's Viewpoint Gallery saw the launch of the first SUN (Shot Up North) Awards, to celebrate and recognise the work of commercial photographers working in the North, from the Midlands to the Scottish Isles. Since then, the SUN Awards have showcased the work of more than 1,000 photographers for advertising, design, editorial and fashion.

This year's award ceremony was held at Matt & Phreds Jazz Club and saw the addition of a new award, named Sunrise, created to showcase professional photographers who are at the beginning of their photographic careers. An exhibition of the winning entries in the 2009 SUN Awards and 50 other images that made it into the SUN catalogue is currently on show at Matt & Phreds, and is well worth a visit.

MANCHESTER, TELEVISION & THE CITY

GHOSTS OF WINTER HILL
Urbis, Manchester
Tel. 0161 605 8200
www.urbis.org.uk
Admission: Free
Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm
Closed Mondays
Until April 2010

For half a century, domestic life in Britain has been dominated by television. The box has ruled our living rooms and shaped national identity. In November this relationship entered a new phase with the digital switchover of the Granada region's Winter Hill transmitter. *Manchester, Television & the City: Ghosts of Winter Hill* is a celebratory exhibition which highlights Manchester's contribution to television history and looks at the cultural impact that television has had on the city itself.

Based on an original concept by writer, consultant and curator Phil Griffin, the exhibition tells the story of Manchester's onscreen presence, through a variety of clips from programmes. It also looks to the future of television, including the development of MediaCityUK and the increasing popularity of 'on demand' television.

READING BY LIGHT

The Gallery @ The Civic, Barnsley
Tel. 01226 327 000
www.barnsleycivic.co.uk
Admission: Free
Open daily 10am to 5.45pm
Sundays 10am to 4.45pm
Until 15th January 2010

Reading By Light dives into the world of light and words, combining contemporary and classic lights with text-based works from international artists and writers to create an exhibition exploring the acts of reading, participation, reflection and consideration. A must-visit for anyone interested in design, art and literature, the exhibition will include new works commissioned specifically for the show which sit alongside chosen objects and text to create a stimulating environment.

The process and act of reading will be explored in a number of light and text juxtapositions ranging from notes, questions, statements, philosophical opinions and humor. *Reading By Light* is a visually stunning showcase developed by Paul Bradley Studios and Design Centre North specifically for The Gallery .

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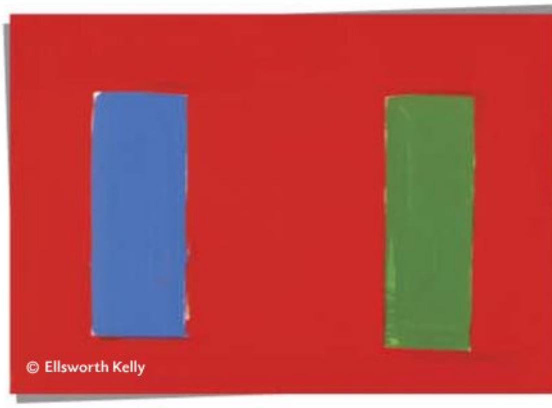
© Imperial War Museum North, 'Living with the wall'



© Trevor Leighton & National Portrait Gallery, London



© Imperial War Museum North, 'Living with the wall'



© Ellsworth Kelly

LIVING WITH THE WALL

BERLIN 1961 TO 1989

Imperial War Museum North, Manchester
Tel. 0161 836 4000
www.north.iwm.org.uk
Admission: Free
Open 1st March to 2nd November 10am to 6pm
Open 3rd November to 28th February 10am to 5pm
Until 21st March 2010

November saw the opening of a photographic display at the Imperial War Museum documenting the story of the Berlin Wall to coincide with the 20th anniversary of its fall on 9th November 1989. Most of these photos have never been on public display before, making it a must-see exhibition.

On display are images that were captured by German photojournalists and British Army photographers documenting the confrontation between the East and West side of the wall, sometimes depicting remarkable stories of bravery and courage.

Stretching 155 km, the Berlin Wall was one of the largest, most sophisticated and heavily guarded walls ever built. Jim Forrester, Imperial War Museum North director, says: "It is remarkable to think that until only 20 years ago one of Europe's great cities was sliced in two. The suffering of people separated from family and friends for more than a quarter of a century is difficult to imagine."

COMEDIANS: FROM THE 1940S TO NOW

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Graves Gallery, Sheffield
Tel. 0114 278 2600
www.museums-sheffield.org.uk
Admission: Free
Open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm
Closed Sundays
From 21st November to 20th March 2010

Sheffield's Graves Gallery aims to put a smile on the faces of visitors this winter with a photography exhibition which pays tribute to some of the nation's finest comic talents. Drawn from the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, *Comedians: From the 1940s to Now* features iconic images of some of Britain's best-loved entertainers.

Spanning almost seven decades of comedic talent and with a specially commissioned video introduction from Paul Merton, the exhibition puts the spotlight on the men and women who have brought laughter into our lives. From the tongue-in-cheek sauciness of Frankie Howerd to the character creations of Lenny Henry, the caustic humour of Jo Brand to the cerebral wit of Stephen Fry, this collection of intimate portraits captures the public and private faces of these remarkable performers.

ELLSWORTH KELLY

DRAWINGS 1954 TO 1962

Mima: Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesborough
Tel. 01642 726 720
www.visitmima.com
Admission: Free
Open Tues, Wed, Fri and Sat 10am to 5pm
Thurs 10am to 8pm
Sun 12am to 4pm
11th December 2009 to 21 February 2010

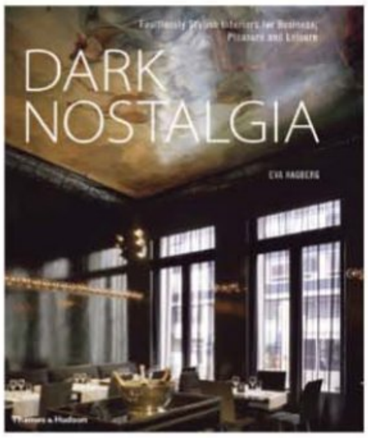
The latest exhibition at MIMA features paintings by Elsworth Kelly from between 1954 and 1962. This was a key eight-year period for the artist when he pioneered his much-admired abstract style that has been vital to the evolution of modern art. Kelly's distinct approach to colour and form has made him one of the most singular and influential American artists of the last century.

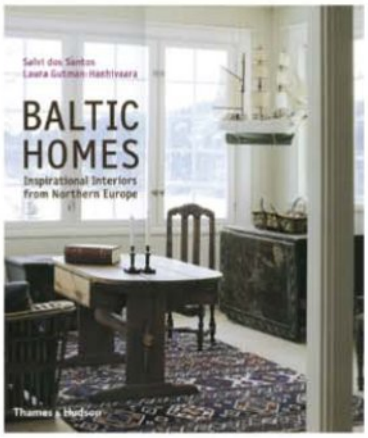
For the exhibition the artist has selected more than 25 drawings that use a variety of techniques including ink, graphite, oil paint and collage. Coming directly from Kelly's studio, they will be shown together for the first time at MIMA. With their heart stopping elegance the drawings in the exhibition will lay bare the visual language that makes Kelly one of the most important artists of our era.

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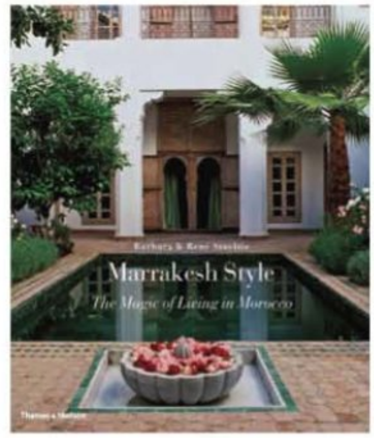
COFFEE TABLE

There will be guests aplenty over the festive season, so stock up on a few coffee table reads as well as mince pies – great for gifts or simply an entertaining read to enjoy with a mulled wine.









Dark Nostalgia

BY EVA HAGBERG
Published by Thames & Hudson
Available now (2 Nov)
Hardback. Price £24.95
www.thamesandhudson.com

With a secondary title of *Faultlessly Stylish Interiors For Business, Pleasure And Leisure*, this fresh and original hardback looks at the late-20th century interest in polished woods, dark metals and brick, velvets, furs and leather – in other words, materials that have a sumptuous nostalgic feel – and their use in commercial and residential design.

Dark Nostalgia looks at designers at the forefront of this field such as Philippe Starck and David Rockwell and features 25 projects including New York's The Bowery Hotel, Alain Ducasse's latest restaurant, and Café WAS in Los Angeles Each project reflects how the dark nostalgia trend has given fresh life to recent designs. Fine photography is offset by a succinct introduction to each project.

The most interesting interior is undoubtedly Shoreditch House by the UK's very own Tom Dixon – he gave the social club a Dickensian-era tea warehouse-style makeover, making *Dark Nostalgia* worth buying for this project alone.

Baltic Homes

BY LAURA GUTMAN-HANHIVAARA AND SOLVI DOS SANTOS
Published by Thames & Hudson
Available now (26 Oct)
Paperback. Price £19.95
www.thamesandhudson.com

Covering the Baltic lands and vistas this glossy paperback takes in Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. It showcases over 20 homes from this fascinating area of northern Europe – rather like a lavish *CFL* reader home Baltic special if you will.

Each home is vividly illustrated with bold colour photography that captures the feel of these delightful homes in northern-most Europe and accompanied by introductory text about the property, its owners and its journey to its current incarnation, plus detailed captions revealing the secrets of the home's décor, furniture and accessories.

Divided into nine chapters, one per country, *Baltic Homes* also explores the culture, climate and architecture of each featured land, revealing how their history and culture have influenced the homes found there, from Baroque doorways in Poland to Latvian balconies. If you fancy a tour of the Baltic from your sofa, this one's for you.

Design in Britain

EDITED BY DEYAN SUDJIC
Published by Conran Octopus
Available now (5 Oct)
Hardback. Price £45
www.octopusbooks.co.uk

From the colourful rainbow of names on the cover, to the rainbow of design subject matter within, this begging-to-be-placed-on-your-coffee-table title explores all aspects of what the Brit in British design means. Case in point: born-and-raised Brit Jonathan Ive is now a designer at Apple – does this mean we can chalk up the iPod as a British design? Ultimately, probably not but it's an interesting point to consider and one of many in this book.

Divided into eight comprehensive chapters (Product, Architecture, Automotive, Graphics, Fashion, Interaction, Identity, Design), each written by an expert, in the field, a flick through *Design in Britain* is a design tour de force. It examines everything from how the shape of commercial architecture has developed in Britain, showcasing examples such as Manchester's Civil Justice Centre, to the high productivity of British car building, but in foreign-owned factories. There's something of interest in here for everyone – even Kate Moss fans.

Marrakesh Style

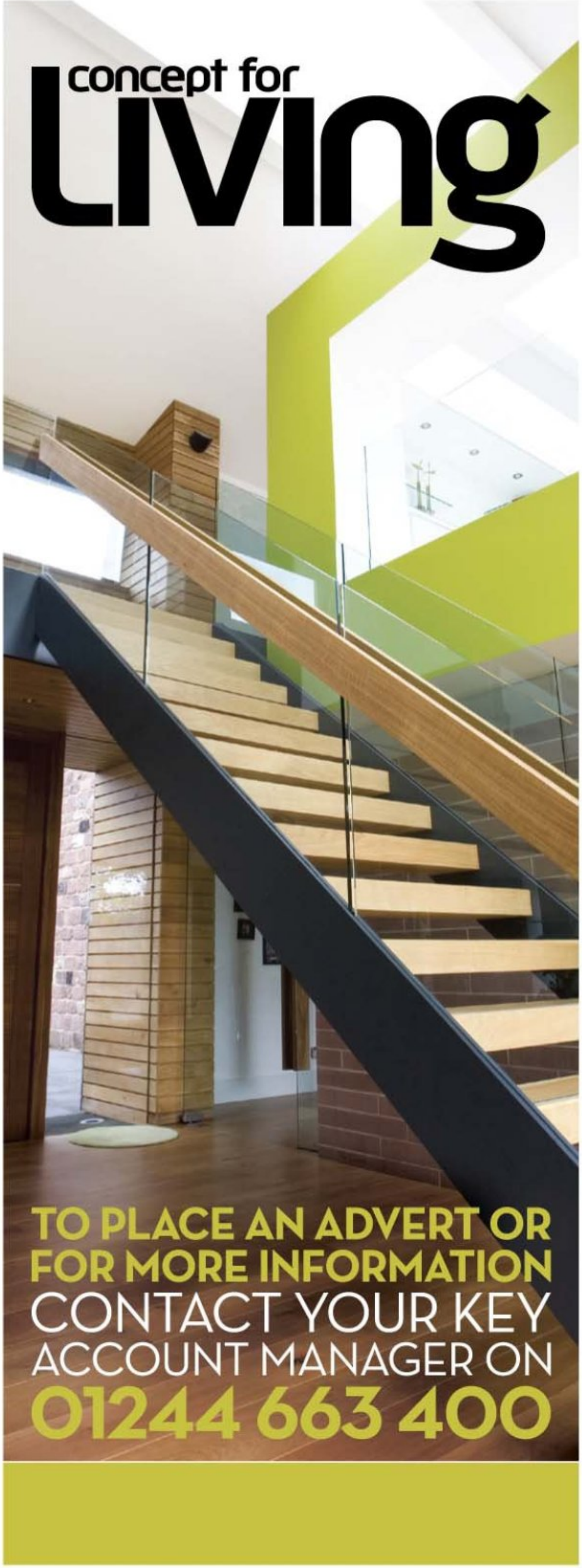
By Barbara and René Stoeltie
Published by Thames & Hudson
Available now (9 Nov)
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AN INTERVIEW WITH

WILLIAM YEOWARD

Words **Katie Cotgrave**



Inspirational style-maker, retailer and designer William Yeoward took time out of his busy schedule to talk to *Concept For Living* about his success and future plans at the beautiful Mulberry Hall in York.

William embarked on a creative career straight from school when he trained under Tricia Guild and later Nicky Haslam William. He opened his first store on the Kings Road in Chelsea in 1985 and from then on has never looked back. Recognised as one of Britain's most renowned designers in furniture, lighting, dinner services and crystal, he is also the author of two delightful books on entertaining at home. William's work can be described as truly timeless and his products bring effortless style to any room.

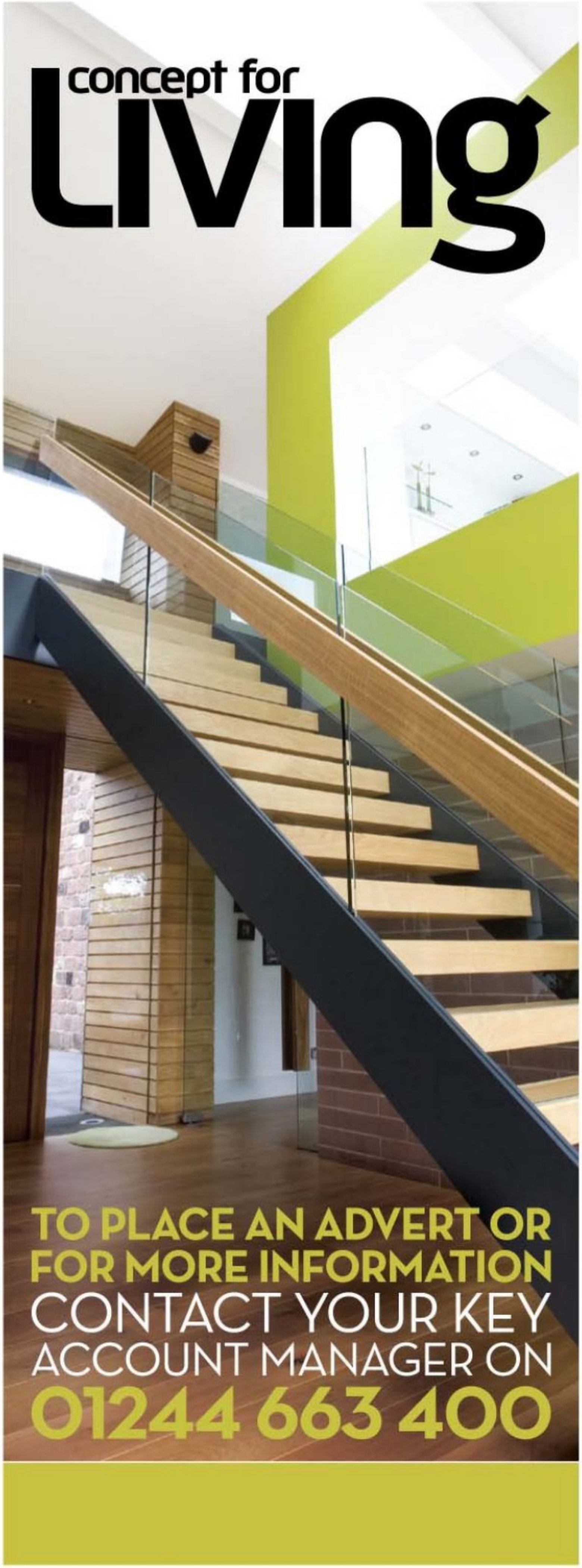
"I JUST DESIGN WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IN MY HOME AND FORTUNATELY THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO AGREE!"

BELOW 'Rhia' chairs. **LAMPS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT** 'Martha', 'Margarhita', 'Ninevagh' lights. **OPPOSITE PAGE** 'Barramundi' table





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Words **Jennie Musgrove** Photograph of artist **Eleri Griffiths**

FLYING **HIGH**

Since becoming a tenant of Manchester Craft and Design Centre three years ago, artist Lily Greenwood has established a reputation for producing enchanting canvases inspired by nature. *CFL* spoke to her to find out more about her artistic influences.



Manchester artist Lily Greenwood creates beautiful canvasses inspired by her love of nature. Blossom, rural landscapes and birds are a few of her favourite subjects, but it's the intricate butterfly paintings for which Lily has become best known. "The butterfly canvases have been the main thing I've developed recently," she says. "It's been a gradual process and I've just started to decide on the way I like to do it – at least for now."

A year after graduating with a degree in Interactive Arts from Manchester Metropolitan University, Lily was offered a tenancy at Manchester Craft and Design Centre. The centre houses 19 shop/studios from which designer makers, artists and photographers make and sell their crafts. For the past three years, Lily has been based here, sharing her studio with designer maker Kathryn Edwards. "I think I'd get far too much into my own little world if I was in my own private studio," she says. "As well as having the general public visiting, it's nice being surrounded by all these other practitioners because we can relate to each other's struggles and triumphs. The craft centre has a good atmosphere and is a kind of antidote to the Arndale Centre for visitors because they can just chill out with a coffee and all the products are unique."

Hailing originally from the North East, Lily's family moved to rural Cumbria when she was six, and growing up in the countryside has instilled in Lily a passion for nature. "I love living in Manchester but I'm definitely a country girl at heart," she says. "I long for green spaces, and the subject matter of my paintings is always nature based. I think the use of birds, flowers and butterflies in my work is my way of bringing nature into the city with me."

Although the butterfly paintings are now Lily's signature artistically, they came about by chance at the beginning of her tenancy at the craft centre. "I did a butterfly painting as an experiment when I first started here and it went down so well that people came back to see more," she says. "I'd only been here a few months when I heard someone say, 'This is the butterfly lady'."

Since then, Lily has concentrated mainly on creating beautiful paintings of butterflies taking to the sky en-mass. The images are at once uplifting and intricately detailed, inviting the viewer to peer closer and examine the complexity of the paintbrush strokes. Lily's technique for making the canvases relies on a mixture of photo-realistic painting and collage, as she explains: "The butterflies are hand-painted separately then reproduced and individually cut out to arrange as a composition on the background, ready to create a collage. After they are fixed in place, I use washes of ink, which not only adds colour to the image but also has an antiquing effect as it reacts with the glue." Lily then adds detail using acrylic paint or pen and finally varnishes the canvas, which is what makes the butterflies seem to shimmer in the light.

Nature is the most obvious inspiration behind Lily's work, but she also names Oriental design as an important influence. "I admire the work of early printmakers such as Hiroshige and Hokusai, and I love Japanese kimono design," she says. "Day-to-day inspirations are broader than this though; anything I see around me could potentially inspire a colour scheme or composition for a canvas." Another influence is 20th century book illustrator Arthur Rackham (whose work includes illustrations for *Peter Pan* and *Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*), as well as other children's book illustrators. "Illustrators have always had the most affect on me, possibly because I like the simplicity of their purpose; they're just trying to illuminate a story and make it enjoyable."

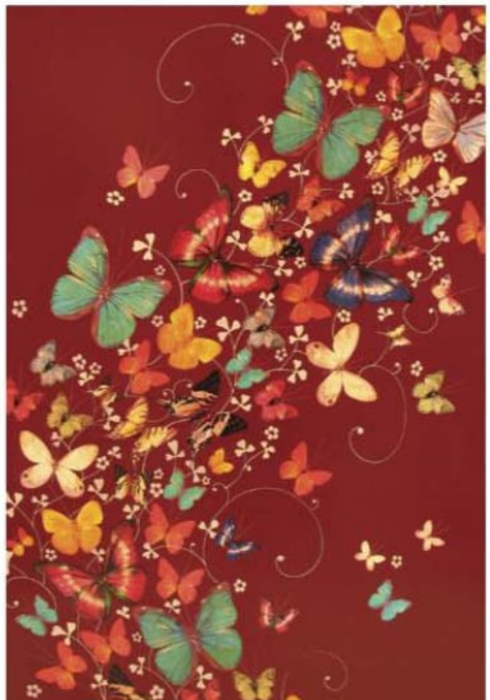


Lily relates to this aim because her own goal as an artist is not dissimilar, as she explains: "I've had internal battles about the meaning of art and the purpose it serves, and have come to the conclusion that my aim on the canvas is to strive towards beauty. It's a simple aim, and hugely challenging, but very rewarding. I'm not a troubled artist who really needs to get to the bottom of the meaning of life. I think that if I can take enjoyment from creating a painting, and if somebody likes it enough to put it on their wall at home and enjoy seeing it every day, then my paintings have a purpose which isn't entirely selfish."

"I REALLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT I CAN SPEND MY DAYS PAINTING, SO AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED LONG MAY IT CONTINUE"

As well as original canvases, Lily takes commissions and sells bags and badges featuring prints of her work in her studio at Manchester Craft and Design Centre. She was also recently invited to join The Art Group, which publishes her work on cards sold in more than 30 countries worldwide.

Lily's future plans include developing her ideas for paintings of birds and creating a picture book, as soon as time allows. "Painting is filling up my time at the moment, but it's nice to know there are ideas waiting for me. For now, I really appreciate the fact that I can spend my days painting, so as far as I'm concerned long may it continue. I'm very aware how lucky I am to be able to make a living doing a job I love." ■

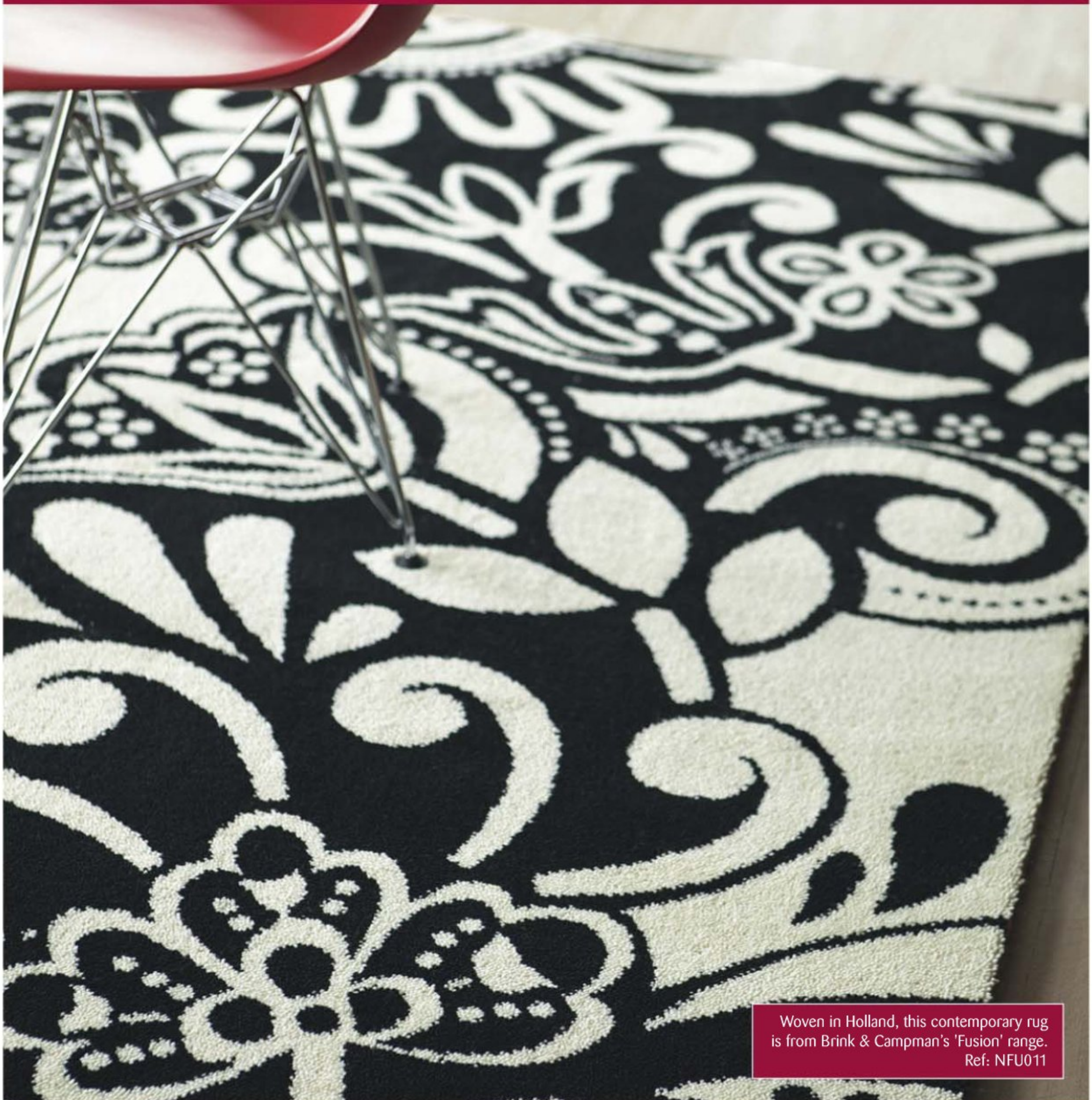


There is an exhibition of Lily's work at The Bowery gallery in Leeds until 3rd January 2010. Visit: www.thebowery.org to find out more. Lily's canvases are also on display and for sale at Webbs Road Fine Art, London. Visit: www.thewebbsgallery.co.uk. If you'd like to see more of Lily's work or contact her, visit: www.lilygreenwood.co.uk.

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VIEW

In our property round up this Christmas we reveal family homes in Derbyshire and Birmingham, Scandinavian-inspired cabins and why you should always hire a project manager when building in France.

SKYLINE'S THE LIMIT

West Midlands apartments are available in the HomeBuy Direct scheme to help first-time buyers get a foot on the property ladder.

Homebuilder Barratt is offering a HomeBuy Direct scheme on a selection of apartments at Skyline, a collection of one- and two-bedroom properties in Birmingham.

The Government scheme allows eligible buyers to receive an equity loan of up to 30 per cent on the value of their new home. This means that with the scheme, eligible candidates could move into a brand new one-bedroom apartment priced at £84,950 for £59,465.

"Buying a new home can be a confusing time, whether it is your first or fifth time," says Graydon Worthing, sales director for Barratt West Midlands. "Whilst ideal for first-time buyers, HomeBuy Direct is also available for those who, for example, do not have enough space in their current home for their needs."

HomeBuy Direct is open to first-time buyers, key workers and others who are currently renting. People who have previously owned a home but are now unable to do so can also apply. Households eligible will be earning less than £60,000 and would not normally be able to afford to buy a suitable property on the open market. There is no interest to pay on the equity stake for the first five years, although a fee will be charged from year six onwards. Buyers can redeem the loan in instalments, purchasing up to 100 per cent of the equity after their initial purchase by buying additional equity at the market rate. Alternatively, if they sell their home, the equity loan is repaid by way of a proportionate share of the sale proceeds.

Paul Spooner, regional director of the West Midlands division of the Homes and Communities Agency, says: "In the current climate it's important that we help a range of people to find the best housing option to suit them, and simultaneously help stimulate the building of new homes. HomeBuy Direct, with our £400 million investment, is just one way in which we're doing this and it is proving extremely popular."

Prices at Skyline start at £84,950. For more information call the sales office on 0121 666 6728 or visit: www.barratthomes.co.uk/skyline.





FAMILY SHOWHOME UNVEILED



A new showhome in Derbyshire demonstrates stylish design in a flexible layout.

A new showhome has been unveiled at David Wilson's latest development in Derbyshire. The Haywood is a four-bedroom property at Castle Heights, which comprises a selection of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom homes.

Ideal for a family, the house features flexible living space spread over three floors and has been designed to meet the needs of a modern lifestyle.

"The Haywood is one of the most popular styles from the David Wilson portfolio and was an obvious choice for the new showhome at Castle Heights," says Philip Lacey, sales director at David Wilson. "Three-storey properties like these are ideal for those seeking a contemporary property as purchasers can adapt the layout to suit their needs. We gave Designer Contracts a brief of creating a comfortable yet flexible family home and I think they have done a fantastic job."

Suzanne Kerley, head of showhome design at Designer Contracts, designed the showhome. "We decided on a neutral colour scheme of browns and creams that would appeal to a wide variety of purchasers but we incorporated accents of peacock blue and duck egg blue which helped to give it a fresh and modern edge," she says. "It's an incredibly flexible style and we've adapted the layout to exemplify this. We're using the study as a dining room and the fourth bedroom has been converted into a study. We've added a feature strip up the stairwell which is designed to demonstrate interesting things you can do with paint and will hopefully encourage purchasers to pick up a brush and get creative. I'm thrilled with the final look of the Haywood showhome."

Located on Castle Road, Castle Heights is in an attractive, rural setting yet it is within easy reach of a number of cities including Derby, Leicester and Birmingham.

Prices at the development start from £59,995 for a one-bedroom apartment. Prices for the Haywood style start from £199,995. For more information call 01283 226 162 or visit: www.dwh.co.uk.

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FIRST SALES OF MANCHESTER FLATS

The first sales have taken place at a new development of apartments close to Manchester's Media City.

The Broadway development was built by Prospect GB and currently comprises 120 properties in Salford Quays. It was one of the first developments in Greater Manchester to offer the HomeBuy Direct scheme.



The scheme, aimed at first-time buyers and key workers, enables purchasers to buy a home via an equity loan of up to 30 per cent of the price. One bedroom apartments are available at Broadway via HomeBuy Direct from £94,150 as opposed to £134,500, with the purchaser able to buy out the equity at any time through further investment or future sale. Rental deals start at £495 for a one-bedroom apartment.



"We're pleased with the success of the development to date, and especially with the way that HomeBuy Direct has taken off," said Neil Waddington, Prospect managing director. "Broadway offers residents a wide range of options: purchase, HomeBuy Direct purchase and rent, to achieve their chosen lifestyle, and this choice is proving attractive."

The spacious properties at Broadway are situated in an established community and feature high quality fixtures and fittings and attractive, modern communal areas. A dedicated secure car parking space is available with each apartment at no extra cost. The homes are located a 15-minute tram journey from Manchester city centre, and Manchester Airport is 20 minutes away.

To arrange to view the show home, call the Broadway marketing suite on 0161 877 2919 or Bridgford's Manchester city centre office on 0845 437 6180. Visit: www.broadway.gb.com to find out more.



THE FOIBLES OF THE FRENCH

When it comes to renovating in France, a project manager is a must-have.

Anyone wanting to turn a rustic wreck into a hot property in France should get a project manager if they want the home finished on-time and on-budget, according to conversion specialists Arena Park France. "Because of the way the system is set up in France, if you turn your back for five minutes you could find that your tradesmen have left the building" says Su Bishop of the company. "Sub-contractors like plumbers, electricians, stone masons and roofers tend, because of the difficult French employment laws, to be small, family-run businesses with perhaps only one or two close family members on the payroll. The problem is, they never turn work down, so may have more jobs than they can handle without recruiting the extra staff to cope with the increased workload. If you're around, they'll focus on your project, but the moment you go away they could decamp to another site to satisfy the next owner who has shown up in town."

Arena Park France is experienced in handling the entire design and build process from start to finish, and communicates in both French and English. "Not many French people carry out major building work on their own homes so there isn't much call for affordable project management," says Su. "Any alteration that requires planning permission – from a complete renovation to adding a window – needs a fully qualified local architect to approve the design so people often retain the architect's service to go on and co-ordinate the build, but the fees are expensive. At Arena Park France we take away all the hassle, send regular photographic updates of the build and employ our own team of trades people so we can manage the timeline perfectly. "The good news is that by law, French builders and specialist tradesmen have to carry a 'decennale' insurance that guarantees their work for ten years. We've found that they are very careful to produce top quality workmanship because if they have any serious claims on their insurance, they won't be able to renew the policy and without it they can't work."

Arena Park France is currently restoring a three-bedroom stone house on a quiet road in Puligny Montrachet, Burgundy. Set around a private south-facing courtyard, the living accommodation is bright and spacious with all bedrooms en-suite, while the master features a 'Juliette' balcony. Ample storage and a vaulted wine cellar complete this perfect lock-and-leave home. The property is priced at €495,000 (excluding kitchen).

To find out more about Arena Park France visit: www.arena-park.com, email: mail@arena-park.com or call +33 (0) 380 214 804.



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BARBEQUE IN WINTER!

Add space and value to your property with a Scandinavian-inspired garden cabin.

Winter is upon us and the barbecuing days of 2009 are well and truly over – that is, unless you happen to own a garden cabin. Thanks to the unpredictable British weather, garden buildings have never been more popular. Nottingham-based Arctic Cabins provide the ideal solution: a range of high quality timber buildings, including the successful Scandinavian BBQ Cabin.

For the uninitiated, a BBQ Cabin is exactly what it sounds like: a barbecue in a timber cabin with seats around the walls. But for those in the know it can be so much more. Based on a traditional Finnish sauna, the sloping wall design is unique to Arctic Cabins and not only enhances the appearance of the building but also increases the available space inside.

Cabins can be supplied with a range of furnishings in a traditional Lapland style and come complete with reindeer skins or cushions and traditional Finnish tableware. The barbeque grill can be used inside and out, so cabin owners can continue entertaining whatever the weather.

The medium-sized 10m² cabin comfortably seats 15 adults or, for the ultimate sleepover, it accommodates three adults or four/five children. There are other sizes available – seven, 17 and 25m² – but it's the 10m² which is the most popular.

"We are still amazed by the response we get to our cabins," says Gareth Parkinson, owner of Arctic Cabins. "People use them for all sorts of different things, not just outdoor dining. Teenager's chill-out rooms, playrooms; a cabin is basically a very cost effective way of creating some extra living space which adds to the appearance and value of a home."

The popularity of Arctic Cabins, Gareth says, is down to two factors. "Firstly, word of mouth – our reputation is growing and we are recommended for our quality, value and service time and time again," he says. "Secondly, I believe that many people are reacting to the credit crunch by actually using their savings to invest in things that are going to give them long-term enjoyment, instead of leaving money in accounts that are doing nothing."

Prices start at £5,995. To find our more about Arctic Cabins, call 0115 972 7789, email: info@arcticcabins.co.uk or visit: www.arcticcabins.co.uk.



DON'T BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD THIS WINTER!

£1,000 OFF AN ARCTIC CABIN

Call it cabin fever but in the spirit of the season, Arctic Cabins are offering all *Concept For Living* readers an amazing £1,000 off the price of an Arctic Cabin BBQ Hut which includes vat and delivery costs.

To take advantage of this great offer, simply place your order before Christmas 2009 for fittings in January or February. Alternatively, readers can opt for free fitting (usually £595 for a 10m² cabin) plus £400 worth of additional fixtures, such as tableware, cushions and curtains.

Call Arctic Cabins direct on 0115 972 7789 quoting reference CFL-007.

Offer applies to orders placed directly with Arctic Cabins, up to and including 24th December 2009 with fittings booked for January or February 2010.

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STYLISH STAYCATIONS

Looking for a luxury hotel where you can get away from it all? Stuart Mears didn't have to travel too far from home in order to check out our homegrown weekend getaways, courtesy of boutique hotel specialists *Mr & Mrs Smith*.

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ABOUT From the moment you walk through the front door of The Peacock Hotel you feel relaxed, calm and pleasantly pleased that you are going to be staying here a few nights. Located in the Peak District, The Peacock is a small but perfectly formed luxury hotel. The spacious rooms, some overlooking the beautiful gardens, ooze warmth, comfort and relaxation, and are adorned with antique furnishings that complement the historic building perfectly.

The main restaurant serves both lunch and dinner, and offers a deliciously mouth watering menu with many ingredients locally sourced. Accompanying the food menu is a well thought out and extensive wine list that covers all four corners of the globe. All we can say is try and leave room for pudding!

WOULD SUIT A romantic weekend break or a week spent experiencing outdoor activities such as walking, shooting, biking or fishing.

NEED TO KNOW The Peacock has 16 rooms. Rates vary from £145-£210, including buffet breakfast. A minimum two-night stay is required at weekends.

***MR & MRS SMITH'S* FAVOURITE ROOMS** Rooms 1 and 7 are cosy and overlook the garden. Rooms 12 and 15 are the quietest being at the back of the hotel and have kingsize beds. Room 5 is the most romantic, with a wooden four-poster, but Room 3 has a beautiful antique bed originally from Belvoir Castle. Room 6 is a big double with a super-kingsize bed.



THE BALMORAL HOTEL

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ABOUT The Balmoral Hotel in Harrogate is situated in a quiet, leafy street, yet is just a few minutes walk from the bustling city centre. This opulent Victorian manor has recently benefited from an extensive and rather groovy refurbishment thanks to interior design specialists Studio 48 – who have transformed this 100 year-old building into a cool and trendy must-stay Harrogate destination. The rooms are both bold and stylish, with elegant chandeliers and suitably styled furniture and décor, which includes Louis XV-style armchairs, Victorian fireplaces, four-poster beds, leather chesterfields and gilt-edged mirrors.

The hotel's restaurant, the Harrogate Grille serves a good and varied choice of food, be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner. It also tries and somewhat succeeds to bring a little of the style and originality of both New York and Paris bistros to the UK.

WOULD SUIT Perfect for a city-shopping break as the hotel is situated close to the city centre, yet secluded enough for relaxation at the end of the day.

NEED TO KNOW The Balmoral has 23 rooms including three suites. Rates vary from £140–£220, including breakfast.

***MR & MRS SMITH'S* FAVOURITE ROOMS** Dripping with decadence, the Windsor Suite is the most spacious room, boasting an imperious, draped bed and a sultry combination of bold blood reds and blacks in its furnishings. The two mini suites and the superior rooms generally have four-poster beds.



CFL RECOMMENDED READ

Mr & Mrs Smith's best selling books are the definitive guide to the most inspirational places to stay – boutique hideaways, luxurious spa retreats or secret city havens. Each review gives the inside scoop on the best rooms and restaurants, plus exciting and unusual things to see or do in the area. Choose from five books: *UK/Ireland* volumes one and two, *European Cities, European Coast & Country* and the latest publication *Australia/ New Zealand*. All contain a BlackSmith membership card (worth £15) entitling holders to exclusive offers from champagne and free nights to late checkouts and reduced rates.
Guide books cost £19.95. Visit: www.mrandmrssmith.com

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Photography Eleri Griffiths

AN ARCHITECT'S VIEW: SEASONAL THOUGHTS

This month Kevin Drayton examines the diverse roles of shop and church in the lead up to Christmas and ponders their differing architectural and design merit.



For some reason, the onset of Christmas sends me a little crazy. I hear the perennial lament that the true message of Christmas is lost in the orgy of consumerism. I also hear complaints that a perfectly good pagan festival has been hijacked by the church. And someone is bound to trot out the line that many of our cherished Christmas 'traditions' are just 19th century German imports marketed by Charles Dickens.

This is not the place, nor do I have the inclination, to engage in debate as to what Christmas should be about. But something I do find fascinating is the way Christmas brings into focus two contrasting architectural types that both play a major part in our festivities: churches and shops. It is the roles such diametrically opposed building types play in so many people's lives at this time of year and what it can teach us about design, architecture and interiors that fascinates me.

Here in the North we are blessed with some of Britain's finest ecclesiastical architecture: Chester cathedral, York Minster and Durham cathedral to name but three and of course there is Liverpool which boasts not one but two cathedrals. In fact such is the wealth of church building in this country that you can hardly nip out for a newspaper without bumping into some charming example. I have a happy memory of a visit to the market town of Beverley in East Yorkshire a while ago. With half an hour to spare at the end of the afternoon, I wandered into the Minster. It was, to all intents and purposes, empty, an early evening sun set the stained glass

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Chester Cathedral

Grosvenor Garden Centre, Cheshire

'Retail interiors can be works of art, but they are often paper-thin. The surface nature of the glamorous world they conjure up can sometimes be glimpsed when a door to the stockroom or staff area is inadvertently left open'

glowing and I sat down to drink in the atmosphere.

By chance, the Minster organist had decided this would be a good time for a practice session and I enjoyed a totally private (and virtually flawless) recital. Nourishment for the spirit – I went home enriched.

A gothic (or neo gothic) church or cathedral, is a very pure expression of architecture. Even for a confessed atheist, the building can work its magic: it is the particular way the walls, roof, windows, columns and carvings are put together. The effect does not rely on a fancy lighting scheme, plush furnishings or opulent decorations. And apart from a regime of cleaning and maintenance, the building has probably remained essentially unaltered for decades, if not centuries. It's not hard to see how, with the addition of some candles, carols and boughs of holly, they can send us into sensory overdrive.

And so we emerge into the shifting world of retail design. In contrast with your local church, many of the glitzier city centre 'units' will rarely go more than a few years without a major facelift, if not a total refit. Retail interiors can be works of art, but they are often paper-thin. The surface nature of the glamorous world they conjure up can sometimes be glimpsed when a door to the stockroom or staff area is inadvertently left open and the sumptuous flooring stops dead at the threshold.

Curiously, the demands of Christmas clearly give many retailers the wobbles. Having spent thousands on creating their everyday fantasy worlds, they struggle to make them appropriately seasonal for a few weeks without bringing in the shopfitters for a total makeover.

One of the most extreme examples of Christmas shopping smoke and mirrors is the emergence in recent years of the phenomenon of the Garden Centre 'Christmas World'. So sophisticated have these become that the glorified agricultural tunnels with which you are familiar for most of the year are, sometime in October, transformed into fairy grottoes that would have a film set designer weeping with envy. Yet in most cases this is achieved with the interior design equivalent of nothing more than some old curtains and a few tins of spray-on snow.

Most of the time, I would urge you to examine your surroundings carefully; to analyse what you see and consider why it has the effect that it does. What makes good buildings? What makes a great piece of townscape, a delightful interior? But now and again, it can be good simply to experience things. Christmas may just be one of those times.

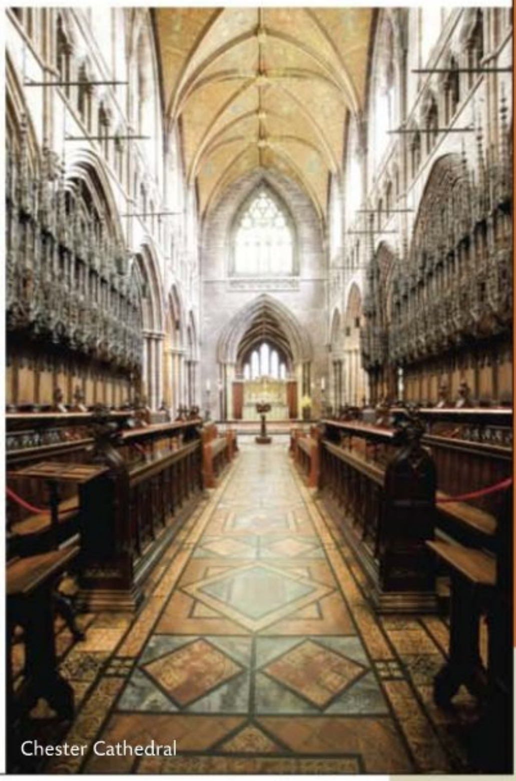
There is a company not far from my office that specialises in designing and creating Christmas displays for major retail outlets. You know, the sort of people who can create eight metre high sparkling reindeer to hang from the ceiling of a shopping centre. Even in these straightened times, Christmas is a critically important time for retailers and these people are good at what they do. Consequently, savvy shop owners beat a path to their door to benefit from their expertise.

Now I've probably come across in this article as a bit of a cynic, a real Christmas humbug. So let me tell you what happened when, a few years ago, I was toiling round our local garden centres one weekend in early December, struggling to find some Christmas lights. I was tired, I was grumpy. I'd had tinsel and trees up to here. Then I turned a corner into a dimly lit cavern and was transfixed by a group of sleeping baby polar bears. As I watched, I saw they were breathing gently and one yawned slightly. They were huddled together and absolutely enchanting. Of course I knew they weren't real. Of course I knew they were part of the Christmas magic kit. I even recognised them as the handiwork of the company mentioned earlier. But I'm not ashamed to say that, despite knowing all this, after staring for a while, I crept past quietly so as not to wake them! ■

Kevin is partner at One17 Design. Visit: www.one17design.com to find out more about his work.



Trafford Centre, Manchester



Chester Cathedral

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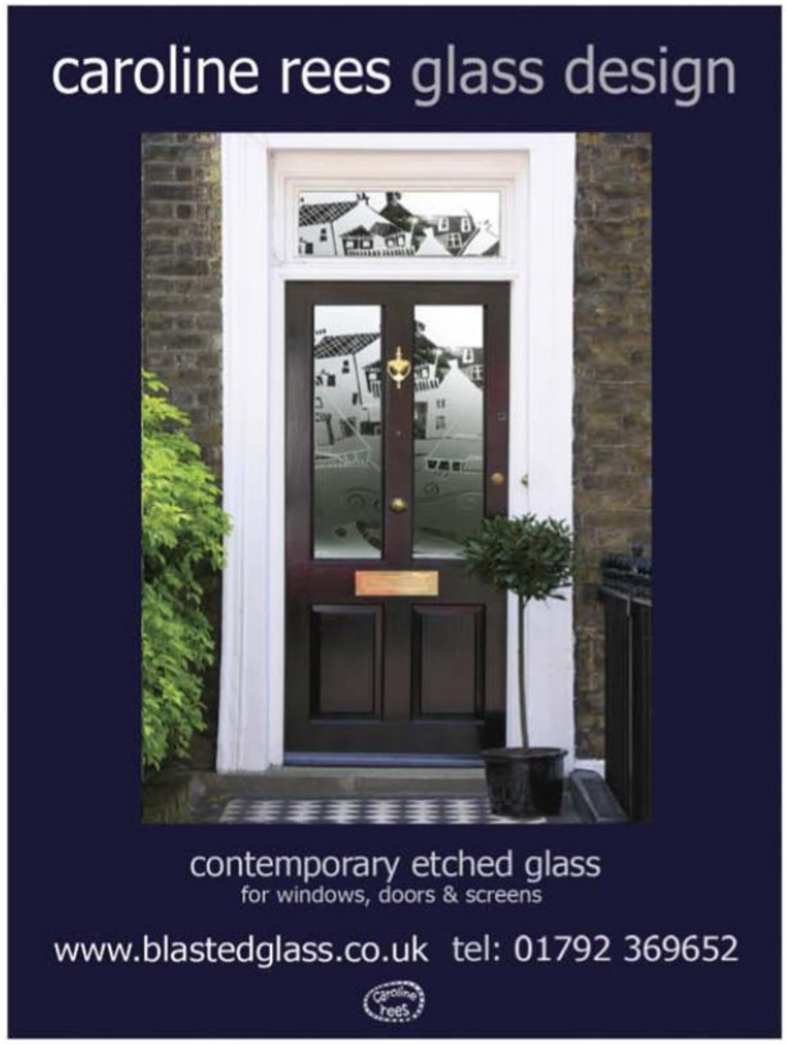
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